



# Lake Havasu City R/UDAT

**R/UDAT Report**

February 15-20, 2007





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# Introduction

## **What is a Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT)?**

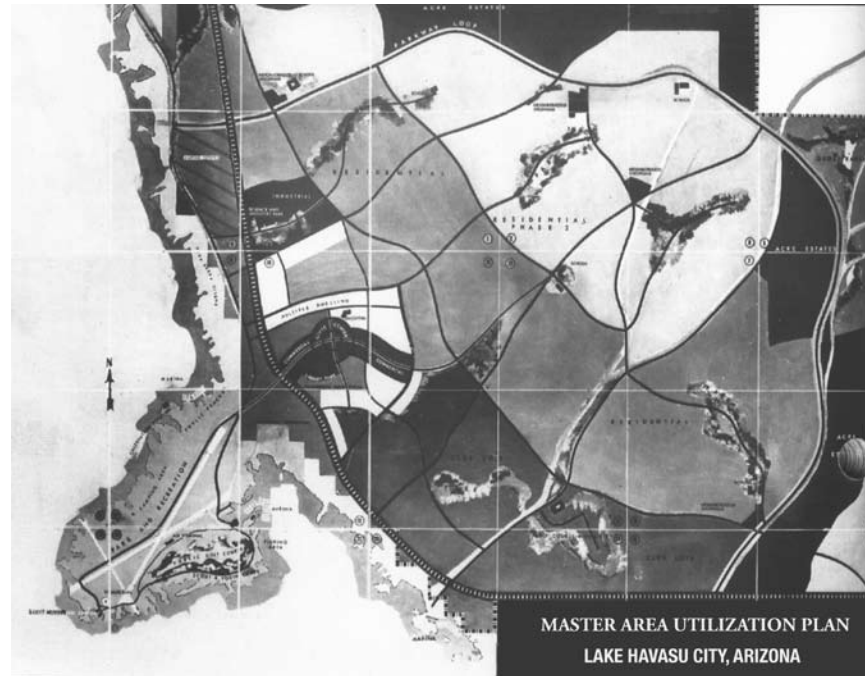
Since 1967, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) has run the R/UDAT (pronounced roo–dat) program. This is a results-driven community design program based on the principles of interdisciplinary solutions, objectivity, and public participation. It combines local resources with the expertise of a multidisciplinary team of professionals, usually from the fields of urban design, architecture, landscape architecture, planning, economic development, who volunteer their time to identify ways to encourage desirable change in a community. They address the social, economic, and political issues as well as develop potential urban design strategies. This comprehensive approach offers communities a tool that mobilizes local support and

fosters new levels of cooperation.

Following months of preparation, the team visits the community for four intense, productive days. At the end of the visit, the team presents an illustrated document of strategies and recommendations for addressing the community's concerns. Implementation is overseen by a local steering committee of community leaders and citizens dedicated to following up on the recommendations. Team members return within a year to review progress and advise on implementation strategies.

The R/UDAT program has used this grass roots approach across the nation to help create communities that are healthy, safe and livable, as well as more sustainable.

# Executive Summary



## Lake Havasu City R/UDAT

### Executive Summary

The Lake Havasu City citizens invited the Regional Urban Design Action Team (R/UDAT) to assist in solving challenges they face on Main Street, an area we now refer to as “Uptown”. While it has remained the Team’s primary focus, as the core, we understand that Uptown impacts, and is impacted by, the entire city.

We toured the city, met with the citizens, studied data and maps and have prepared this report with our findings and

# Executive Summary

recommendations. The important work lies ahead and lies squarely in the hands of the Lake Havasu City community.

## **Oasis**

The team has discovered a peculiar place. A place founded as a result of the human need and attraction to water, built on the idea of one individual in solitude. What is the formula for an oasis in the desert? Simple, start with an awe inspiring setting, combine water and mix in Vision. The R/UDAT team has strived to apply the same recipe and ingredients in our search for Lake Havasu City's future.

## **An awe-inspiring setting**

The Mohave Mountains, the lake and the sky. This is what Robert McCulloch started with. Today we are still overwhelmed by this dramatic environment that shall be respected. However, the city that has grown beyond McCulloch's dream is in need. The team, with the help of the community, has crafted a plan for a new awe-inspiring setting.

The citizens of Lake Havasu City envision a community with a heart. The Uptown district, the soul of the community, formerly known as Main Street will become a pedestrian friendly, active, urban neighborhood that belongs to all residents, where living, working, shopping, and playing occur.

There will be a new public plaza at the center of Uptown, where nature meets city, at the Pima Wash. Native landscaping and trails will meet new restaurants, shops

and places to gather with residents enjoying a new way of living from their upper floor flats above. Nearby, a new Performing Arts Center, Transit Station, and museum will serve as anchoring community assets for both residents and visitors of Lake Havasu City.

As the heart of the community, connections to Uptown are critical. A new transit route along the "McCulloch Mile" will bring tourists to Uptown and residents to the Island. Pedestrian friendly, traffic-calmed streets will reach out to the surrounding neighborhoods inviting nearby residents to enjoy a stroll to their "town center". Continuous landscaped trails along Pima Wash will reach up the mountain and down to the lake, connecting people to water.

## **The Quest for Water**

The City of Los Angeles has an influence on Lake Havasu City today that is synonymous to and rivals its once far-reaching engineering feat: the quest for water. Tourists swamp the channel for some of the same reasons residents move here. However, the team has noticed the dual economy fueled by dual interests, and how it has driven and continues to drive dual visions. One side is a tourist economy that seeks excitement and activity on the waterfront. The other is the quieter permanent resident, family-oriented community who wishes to retain the character, enjoying the climate, the views and the lake. This division of interests has had serious impacts on the development of the city, its zoning laws, taxation, and its ability to fund improvements.

# Executive Summary

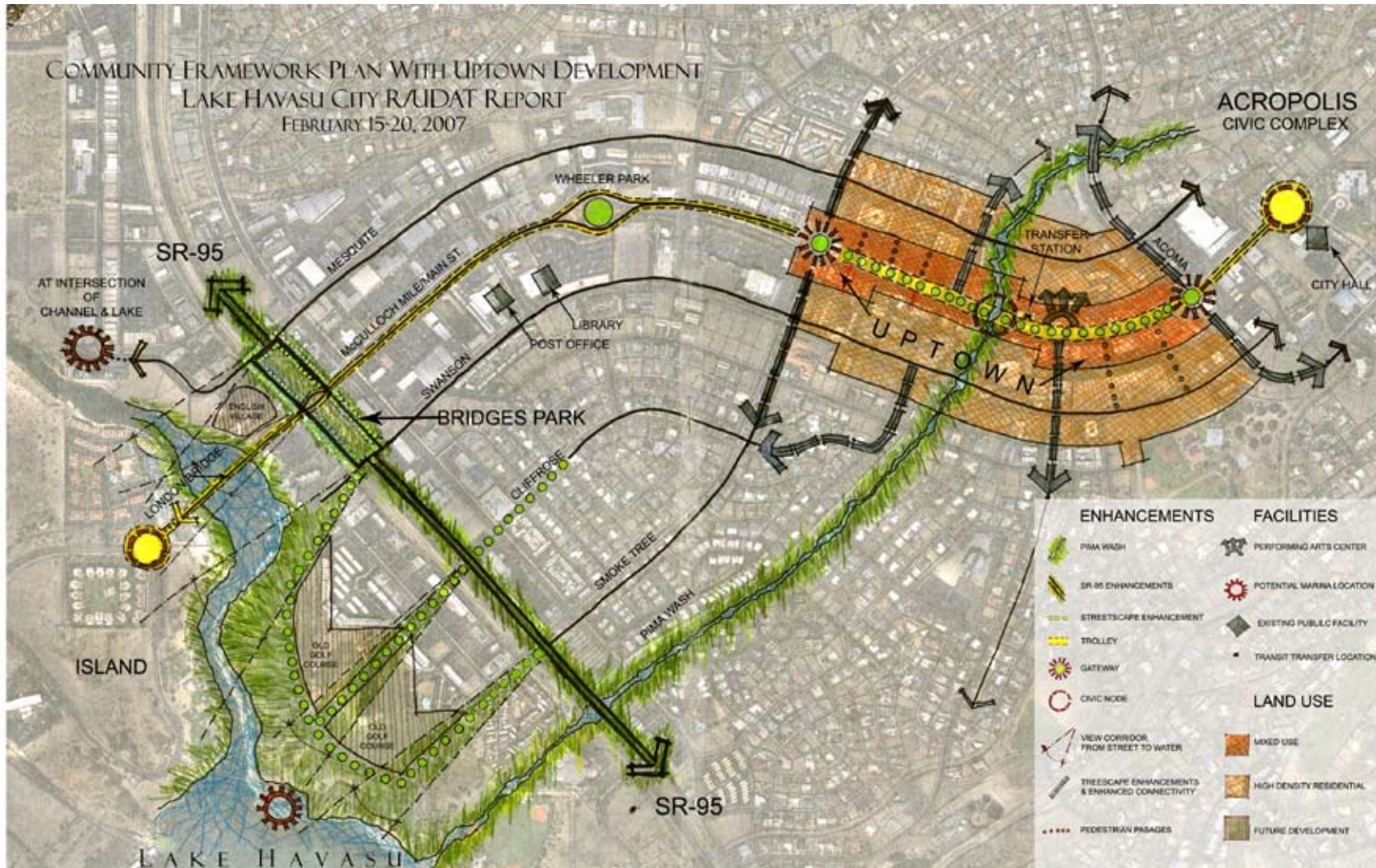
The plan will bring these parallel economies together, to capitalize on the hundreds of thousands of visitors with an invitation to Uptown. Likewise it will connect residents to the water by opening up the shores of the Island and expanding access on the mainland. Long axial vistas along streets will be maintained while physical and visual connections will be created. Running water in Pima Wash and a family friendly splash plaza will bring water to Uptown.

## **A Monumental Vision**

Built on a visionary's grand idea, Lake Havasu City has become a favorite destination and place to live. It is this level of will and persistence that may successfully realize the most far reaching, yet critical aspects of the plan.

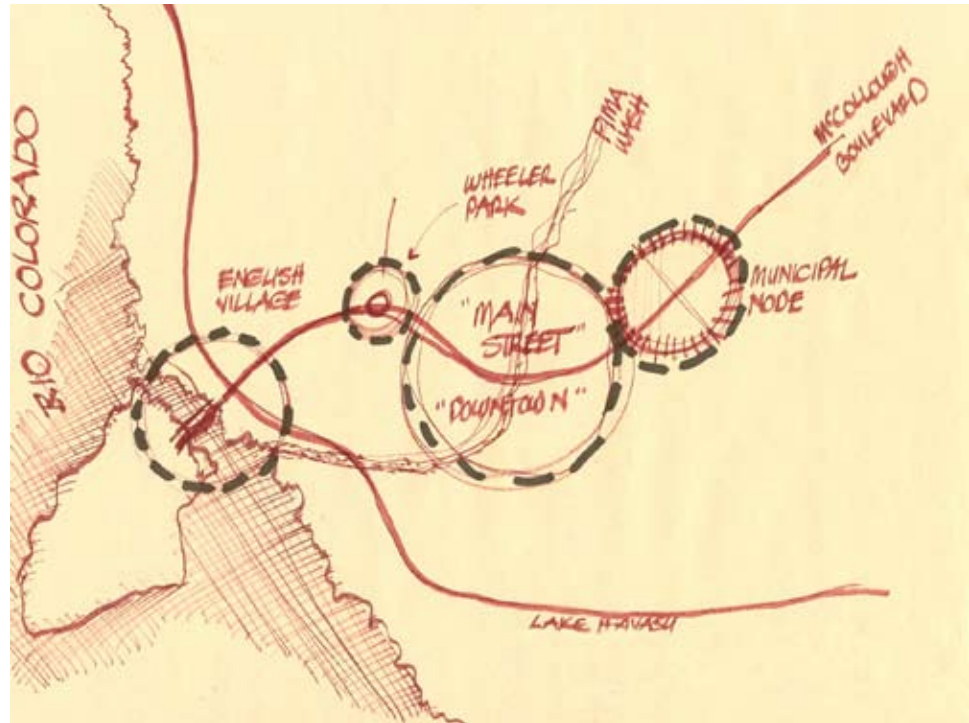
We heard from citizens that State Route 95 is a “disgrace” as a gateway and a barrier between the city and the lake. We challenge the citizens, city officials and the tourism industry to rally behind a long range concept that essentially eliminates SR95 near the Channel and the London Bridge. This will create beautiful gateways, a monumental point of arrival and a grand public space for all. Signifying the long-needed relationship between town and lake and bridging the divide that separates people, assets, ideals, and place.

So, in dusting off Mr. McCulloch's tool box, we unveiled many physical and symbolic bridges that have yet been built. It is time to unite the community and your vision for the future.



Community Framework

# Community Framework



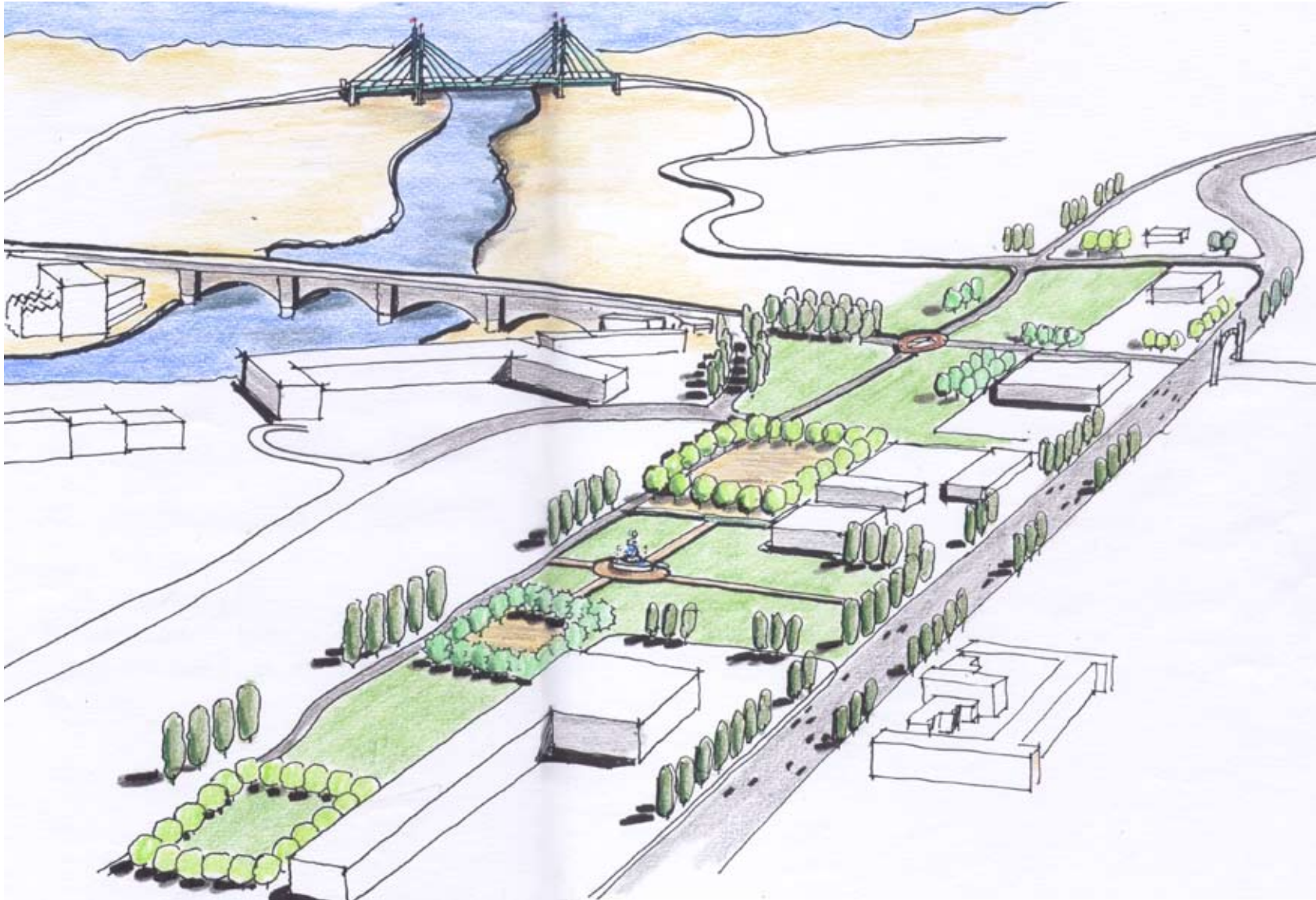
"Island to Acropolis" should be a journey through distinct districts.

## From "Island to Acropolis"

### Community Framework

The heart of this city is a progression of "civic nodes of activity", beginning with the island, continuing to the English Village, uphill to the post office / library / financial / commercial area of Wheeler Park, extending to the downtown area, and finally, up on the hill of the municipal complex, a kind of 'acropolis' overlooking the town. A quick review of the city's current General Plan confirms the commercial zoning of this progression.

# Community Framework



Moving HWY. 95 onto Lake Havasu Avenue for a short section between Mulberry & Willow would allow for a large urban park. The new channel bridge should be an engineering marvel of the 21st century.

# Community Framework

## Highway 95 Corridor

One of the first impressions of our city is from the Hwy.95 corridor with strong community consensus for improvement and amelioration. Treescape of native Sonoran desert species would have a tremendous impact on the visual quality of the city. Additionally, improvements in grading, rip-rap slopes, rock ground covers, and hardscape elements should be considered to reinforce a river oriented expression.

Additional considerations include:

- Integrate public art into stair stepping retaining walls with native landscape materials including riparian grasses, agave species, and purple prickly pear.
- Gabion walls of river tumbled stones reinforce the river theme of the community.
- Sonoran desert motifs can be cast in bas-relief concrete in engineered pylons, walls, and spandrels.
- Informational signage clutter under government jurisdiction should be reviewed for clarity and redundancy.

The Hwy. 95 corridor could evolve incrementally over time much in the same way ADOT has participated in the evolution of Apache Boulevard and Mill Avenue in Tempe, especially if one day the “parkway/bypass Hwy. 95” around LHC becomes a reality. Current traffic counts show that Hwy. 95 has become a “local expressway” with traffic



**Gabions of tumbled river stones communicate a riparian theme while managing engineered slopes.**



**A striking example of engineered retaining wall incorporating a river theme with integrated sculpture..**



# Community Framework

*“The city really needs to become more attractive by greening up the area.”*

*-Mike Quin  
Lake Havasu City  
Citizen*

One grand idea along these lines could be triggered by the construction of a new channel bridge, which would result in the London Bridge becoming less important for vehicular traffic and giving one of three lanes over to a bicycle-hike-bike taxi route.

This would eliminate the need for the Hwy.95 underpass under McCulloch Blvd. and could allow the right-of-way to receive earth fill, bringing the grade up to “natural” grade between Swanson and Mesquite. For this stretch of highway, the north and south bound lanes could be bowed to a tuning fork shape that results in a large, urban greenspace we have called Bridge Park which could be integrated with new urban development .

Another notion for improving the appearance of Hwy.95 is a variation of the same “triggering scenario” of a new bridge is to reroute Hwy.95 onto Lake Havasu Avenue from about Mulberry Street at the south to perhaps as far north as Willow Avenue. This would result in a huge right of way parcel coming available for use as community open space, a sort of “Central Park”. Likewise, Lake Havasu Avenue would receive a significant urban streetscape enhancement while allowing traffic access to McCulloch Blvd.

These ideas for a grand vision for Hwy. 95 will create a definitive sense of arrival in your city while bridging the gap between the lake and the city.

As with other state highway evolutions, it would take many years to realize such ambitions, but the benefits to urban quality could be tremendous.

# Community Framework



New Hwy.95 modifications at grade allowing access to the London Bridge and creating new Bridge Park.

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# Community Framework

*“Crowds stand around all day long and criticize that bridge, and find fault with it, and tell with unlimited frankness how it ought to have been planned, and how they would have built it... It is really refreshing to hang around these and listen to them. A foreigner would come to the conclusion that all America was composed of inspired professional bridge builders.”*

*-June 23, 1867, Mark Twain*



Some say the London Bridge puts Lake Havasu City as one of the top ten bridge attractions. This new 21st century bridge / civic sculpture could certainly move Lake Havasu to number 5 on the list.

## Renewal of the English Village

Well loved years ago by so many residents and visitors, the English Village and the associated retail and tourist uses around the bridgewater channel are in chronic need of refurbishment. The R/UDAT team agrees with so many citizens who spoke to the need for authenticity in architecture, building materials, and details.

The public access to the water and channel walk need to be enhanced as is possible, and considerations of additional marina and boat launch facilities should be looked at carefully.

## New Channel Bridge

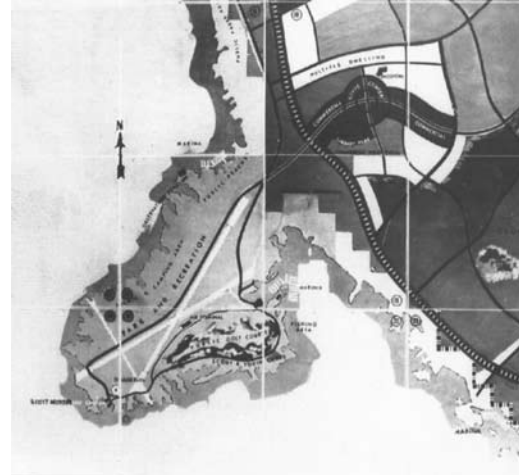
The R/UDAT team understands that the current new bridge proposal, Option C, is a response to budget concerns with some theming elements added out of aesthetic concern. We strongly recommend that these false theming elements be eliminated. The new bridge should be an expression of the new millennium, a progressive community, and be a contrast and counterpoint to our 1831 beauty.

Ideally, our community would match the bold vision of our founder and construct a dramatic cable stay bridge that will contribute to tourism and the image of our city. Many residents have stated that they can't easily see the London Bridge anymore, but properly executed, the new bridge will contribute to civic pride and urban form for this city of bridges.

## Island Development Future

Huge potential exists for the island in terms of potential for tax base, recreational amenities, and creating distinctive urban identity. Many R/UDAT team members found it odd that the island, so desirable, is filled with manufactured housing while expensive custom homes are perched high above the hill far from the river, the waterfront, and its allure.

While an entire R/UDAT could be focused on this area alone, our basic recommendations are to fulfill Mr. McCulloch's original vision by preserving large portions of the island for a large public park, consider density and height increases for development and tax base improvement, encourage resort uses, and require public access across private property to and along the shore.



## Drainage Courses, Washes and Arroyos

In nearly every instance, the washes and arroyos are underutilized for recreation, landscape, and as civic connectors. The city government has begun this improvement process with some pathways on the edge of the Pima Wash and some expansion planned. At the civic level, the washes could be an exceptional hike-bike opportunity with considerable amelioration potential for the entire town.

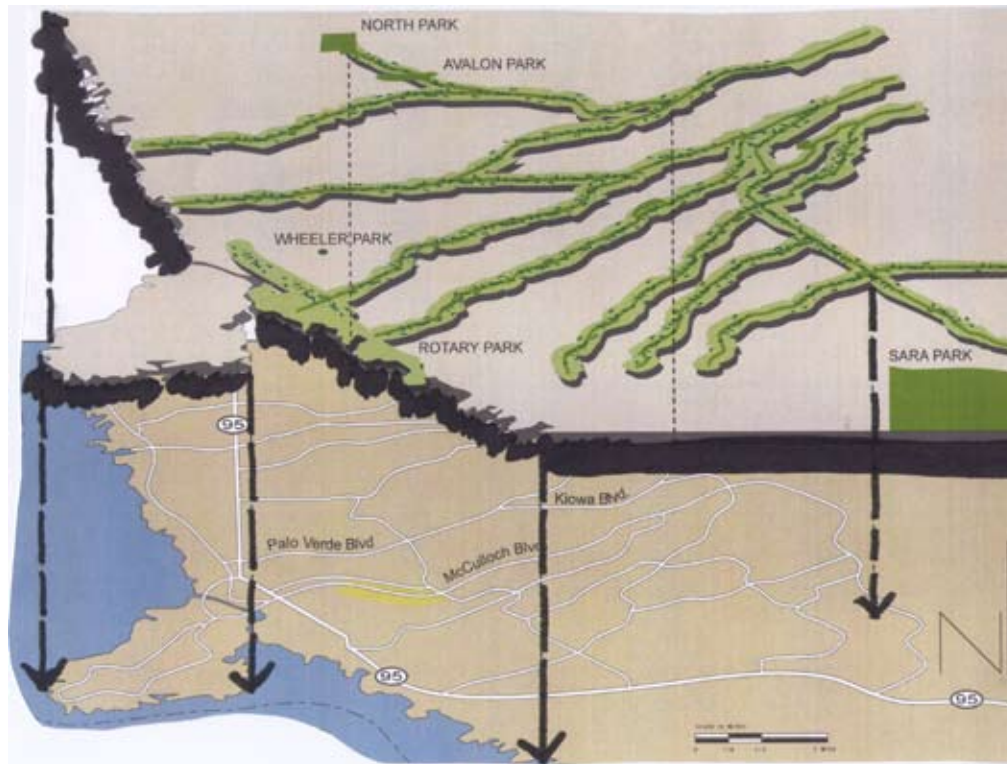


The washes can become much more than just an engineering solution  
- they can be a place to enjoy nature, get exercise, and meet friends.

# Community Framework

## Parks System

Success of the small neighborhood parks is a wonderful existing asset of the city and could be made even more beneficial for community connectivity by seizing opportunities to unite green park spaces with trails and washes. Many of these small parks are “landlocked”, but opportunities may arise for small incremental additions over time, creating a “green necklace” that can be overlaid on the city over time.



Overlay a green necklace of trails and linear parks on top of existing neighborhood greenspaces and washes.

## Waterfront Access

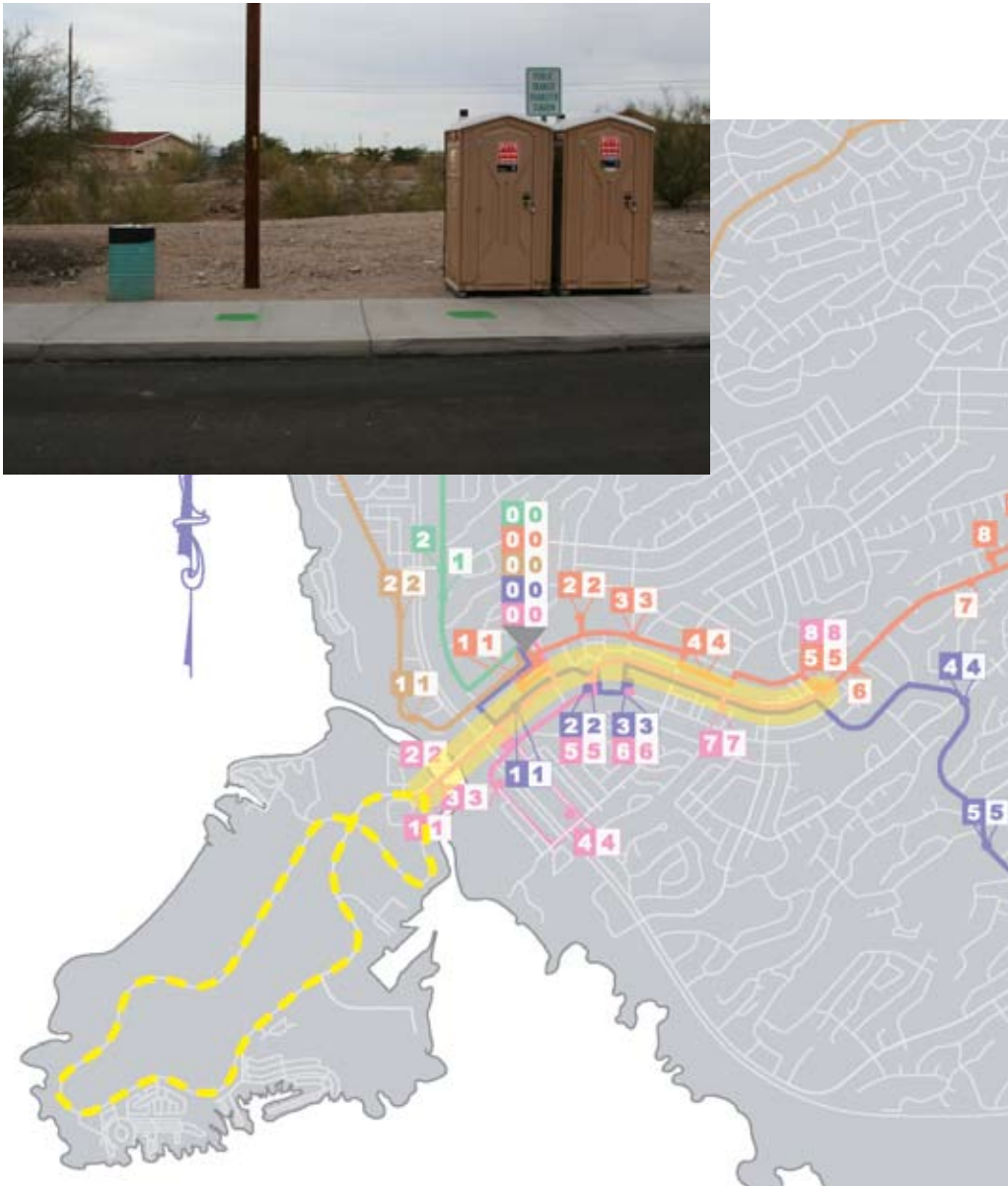
As in all other riverfront communities, public access to the Colorado River is a prime asset of our community. In a desert community, it's even more imperative to look for every opportunity to extend and enhance public waterfront access. One significant example is the Bridgewater Links golf course, understood to be up for sale at a state land auction around 2012. The R/UDAT team recommends that LHC municipal government aggressively negotiate the terms of the sale to the highest bidder to provide for waterfront access as well as protections for river viewsheds.

Connections via hike bike trails on surface streets and through the arroyo system to waterfront areas is an especially important priority for Lake Havasu City and the views to the river in the public streetscape realm of Mesquite Avenue, Main Street, Swanson Avenue, Cliffrose Drive, and Smoketree Avenue.

The Pima Wash may well be one of the first pedestrian and bike ways that would allow residents access to waterfront from uptown and even from neighborhoods farther north. Priority for enhancement of Pima wash from Uptown to shoreline is a noble goal.



# Community Framework



Havasutransit should institute an express trolley to connect the bridgewater channel attractions with the Uptown district.

## Uptown Transit

Most visitors and tourists never experience Uptown. Uptown is too far, too steep and too uninteresting, for most people to walk from the Bridgewater Channel. The bus takes too long, ½ hour, to be used by people who have access to a car. The few visitors who experience Uptown have had but one choice: drive a private auto. As a result, Uptown gets less business and Lake Havasu's traditional commercial areas are divided.

The result is fewer customers coming to Uptown, a more difficult commute for community residents working at Bridgewater Channel or the island, and more congestion and parking problems from those who do drive.

The bus connection is actually good for a small city system designed to move workers and those without cars, but it is not designed for nor does it well serve tourists and Bridgewater Channel and Uptown residents who want to move back and forth. The long headway (30 minutes), the fee (\$1.00), the non-direct route, and the undesirable transit transfer station, all send a clear message this is not a bus for those with options.

Havasutransit (HAT) should institute an express van or rubber-wheeled trolley to connect the two downtowns. The trolley should be free to provide a balance with driving (so long as parking remains free, the trolley will not attract a large amount of users if there is a fee). The system should ideally provide an easy transfer to other HAT buses, but only if such transfer can be done to avoid delays.

The service should have maximum 15 minute headway from end to end, with 10 minutes more desirable, and

run a minimum of twice an hour. Less frequent or longer service will make it unacceptable to most people who can otherwise use a car.

To speed transit, and allow it to compete with cars, traffic signals and HAT should be retrofitted with a transit signal priority system which automatically adjust traffic signal timing to shorten time it takes a bus to wait for a red light.

The van or trolley should be funded by some combination of transient lodging tax and, as a condition of permit approval by new projects developed along the Bridgewater Channel. The projects provide a need for better connections to Uptown, and as such those projects should pay their fair share of the cost.

As additional facilities are developed on the island, the route could be extended through the island, with new vans or trolleys added to avoid reducing frequency of service.

## Improve Bicycle Facilities

In addition to bicycle and multiple use trails, Lake Havasu can make other improvements to make the community more bicycle friendly. There are five types of bicycle improvements that would be of immediate use to Lake Havasu.

First, bicycle lanes should be installed whenever possible throughout the city. McCulloch Boulevard should have a bicycle lane, which apparently it can accommodate if the traveled lanes are marked at ten feet wide.

Second, bicycle racks should be located throughout the city at convenient locations. This would make it much easier for bicyclists to lock their bicycles. It would also reduce the frequency of bicyclists inappropriately locking their bicycles to signs, trees and railings. The City should install sturdy racks in existing commercial areas. The City should require that every new commercial and multifamily home project install sturdy bicycle racks, bicycle lockers, or inside storage for bicycles.

Third, the City should explore a bicycle rental program using automated bicycle rental stations. Similiar to airport luggage cart racks, but accepting credit cards, these would provide an easy way for tourists to rent bicycles for their journeys through the City.

Fourth, ensure that all traffic signal sensor loops or cameras can be triggered by bicycles along the McCulloch Mile to make this spine friendly to bike traffic. Over time, other corridors can be added as demand and funds are available.

Finally, the City should explore a free bicycle program using abandoned bicycles collected by the Police. Several communities have adopted such a system where volunteers fix up the bicycles and paint them a bright color, to make them less attractive to steal. The bicycles are then made available on the honor system. In many, but not all, of these communities, shrinkage of bicycle stock has been minimal.

Uptown bikes could be bright “Havasu Blue” with logos identifying Main Street or the Uptown District. Regular van pickups of bikes at the waterfront in masse can return the bikes uphill to be used again from Main Street.

*“{We Need} a trolly  
from the bridge to  
downtown.”*

*-Floyd Hamilton  
Lake Havasu City  
Citizen*

# Uptown Framework

## Uptown Framework

Lake Havasu City downtown is a district with specific boundaries unknown to some residents and almost all high school students we visited with were not sure of the boundaries of downtown. Following a suggestion from one of Lake Havasu's citizens, the R/UDAT team recommends renaming the area between Smoketree and Acoma and from Swanson up to Mesquite as "Uptown".

## Finding the Uptown District

Presently, due to the Hwy 95 underpass, many tourists miss the opportunity to access McCulloch Boulevard. Additionally, the name doesn't always register as "Main Street" to visitors, yet so many locals refer to McCulloch Blvd. as Main Street. We recommend that new street signs be installed between the London Bridge and Acoma St. that will identify this stretch as "Main Street" in large lettering to match the vernacular residents use. In addition, above the street name, the area will be identified as the "McCulloch Mile", keeping the namesake intact while creating understanding about the location of "Main Street". The intent is to also create some curiosity among visitors so as to have them drive farther uphill than the oft quoted upper limit of "...no farther than Safeway." The actual distance of one mile is from the London Bridge to the entrance of the renovated uptown district, so the name "McCulloch Mile" is wonderfully appropriate.



## Gateways, Monuments & Public Art

Visually announcing entry to the Uptown District at Main and Smoketree as well as Main and Acoma will be important to establishing an identifiable Uptown district. Textured paving at the intersections as well as gateway pylons, seasonal banners, or perhaps environmental / public art will put this district on the cultural map of the region.

## Character and Identity

Many residents expressed the idea that Uptown "...needs a theme." The R/UDAT team feels strongly that the Colorado River and the riparian character of the region can be expressed in Uptown through the use of riparian plant material, riparian themed hardscape elements, adopting "Havasupai Blue" as an accent color throughout the district, use of large, river tumbled stones installed to resemble river and stream courses, and using river themed elements in signage, public art, and civic improvements.



Simple banners, median landscape of towering cotton wood trees, and storefront balconies will define a gateway and a new scale for Uptown.

# Uptown Framework



New Uptown scale: taller buildings with loft living above, tall cotton trees with river themed median landscape.

## Landscape & Streetscape

The R/UDAT team is sensitive to the expense previously expended on Main Street. We recommend no changes in the short term for sidewalk widths, curb locations, and streetscape improvements. As replacement or expansion of improvements are required, we recommend that new items express a “River Theme” that tells the world that this is a special place in the Sonoran region. Long-term recommendations include:

- Removal of diagonal parking that is somewhat dangerous for motorists backing up onto main street in favor of parallel parking both sides.
- Width gained from removal of diagonal parking to be disturbed to a new 10” wide landscape median. This continues the median from the McCulloch Mile districts to the west.
- The new median is to be planted with native Arizona cottonwoods, conveying a river theme and giving green lush shade in summer, gorgeous yellow fall color, and allowing the sun to warm the street in winter due to their deciduous foliage.
- This median could also be filled with large, river tumbled rocks to convey the riparian theme along with native river grasses or other accent vegetation.
- 5’ wide bike lane could be added to each side of Main Street.
- Existing sidewalk plantings of alternating Mexican Fan Palms and Sonoran Palo Verdes should be gradually phased to all Palo Verdes. This will give Main Street

pure Sonoran character, provide more shade than the palms they replace, and will allow palms to be transplanted to create a different and distinct identity for Smoketree, Mulberry Avenue, and Acoma. Because palms transplant at a 95% success rate, little money would be lost in this gradual transition..



Uptown could become a city of distinctive tree lined boulevards. Mulberry Avenue looking south could become a palm lined view corridor to the Colorado River.

# Uptown Framework



## Pima Wash and Main Street Enhancements

A significant drainage course through Uptown, the Pima Wash needs major landscape and hardscape improvements. Returning the Sonoran legacy to the heart of uptown will present numerous opportunities for beautification, installing an interpretive nature walk, and riparian themed public art featuring Colorado River fish species, waterfowl, amphibians, native vegetation, javalinas, roadrunners, desert snakes, and other desert and river themes.

The Main Street bridge is an expression of minimal engineering necessities, with little money spent on this highly visible structure beyond the basics. Again, for a city famous for its bridge, a stronger image and expression is recommended for civic pride and identity.

A practical solution is to add enhancements to the basic bones already in place with a new themed balustrade, new lights, and colorful, seasonal banners could be added. Over time, even the structural concrete walls could be enhanced with real stone facing or gabion embrasures. Colored, textured paving should be installed over the entire bridge deck surface to create a plaza, a “focal point” of Uptown that can receive a monument in the center of the plaza with market umbrellas and specialty retail carts.



*“Water feature with seating through the wash.”*

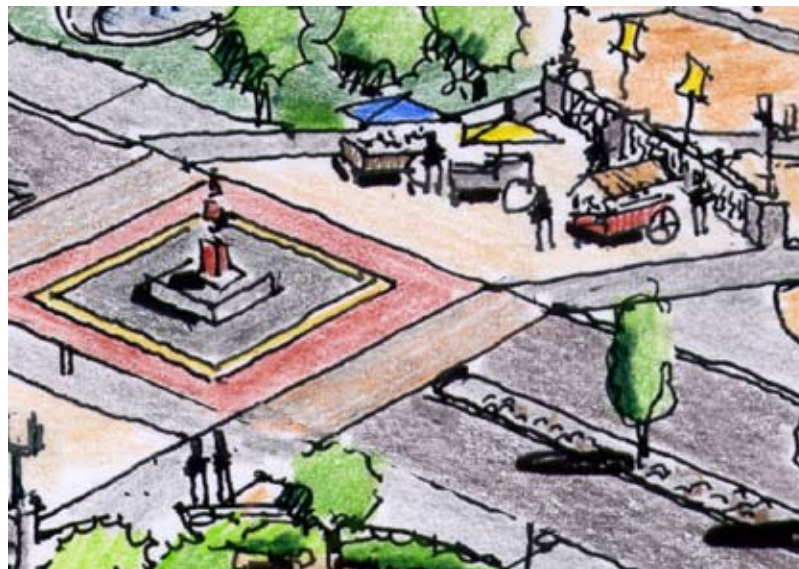
*-Ralph Tapscott  
Lake Havasu City  
Citizen*

# Uptown Framework

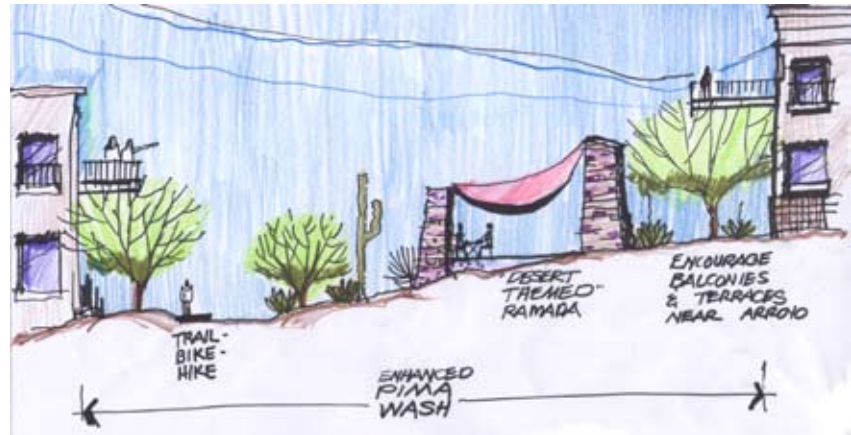


# Uptown Framework

The R/UDAT team recommends that the design of the current Pima Wash pathway improvements be carefully reviewed in terms of having the best natural experience. This pathway system should be thought of as a nature trail, with interpretive components that tell the story of regional flora and fauna. Over time, perhaps even more significant elements can be added such as shade ramadas, “kivas” for conversation and relaxation, and other improvements that “bring the great Sonoran desert into the city.” This wash could be very similar to nature walks at Boyce Thompson Arboretum in Globe, AZ or the Phoenix Botanical garden and will provide a free tourist and family destination to the Uptown Main Street district.



# Uptown Framework



## Open Space

Beyond the Pima Wash enhancement, few significant open space opportunities exist. Smaller pockets of activity could provide interest and become 'people magnets' for all generations. Recommended for early implementation is a simple water play venue for toddlers and families. Likely of simple technology, this "splashpad" of random water jets with padded, soft play surfaces would be a tremendous draw for tourists and local families alike.

## New Civic Improvements for Uptown

Many citizens of Lake Havasu have mentioned the need for moving the museum on London Bridge Road to Uptown, or to provide opportunities for art, culture, outdoor movies, and perhaps the need for public restrooms. Gaps in "the smile" of downtown storefronts should be filled when possible to complete the streetscape, adding new life and interest, and possibly to provide interim uses such as a transit stop station, art exhibition, or even modest museum potential. Other options include small community playhouse, incubator space for local artists, and special start up businesses. Certainly it makes sense that all booster organizations promoting Uptown should locate their offices on Main Street.

## Collegiate Opportunities

Discussions of 4 year colleges abound, and the R/UDAT team strongly recommends aggressively pursuing locations in Uptown. Large parcels of land surround the Motel Six and Shakespeare Hotel with both of these hospitality properties in great distress and disrepair. Rehabilitating parts of these buildings for office use for campus use along with new teaching facilities could be an early 24 hour use for downtown, with dorms, offices, and instruction all bringing people, activity, and the desirable retail and service uses that serve college campuses.

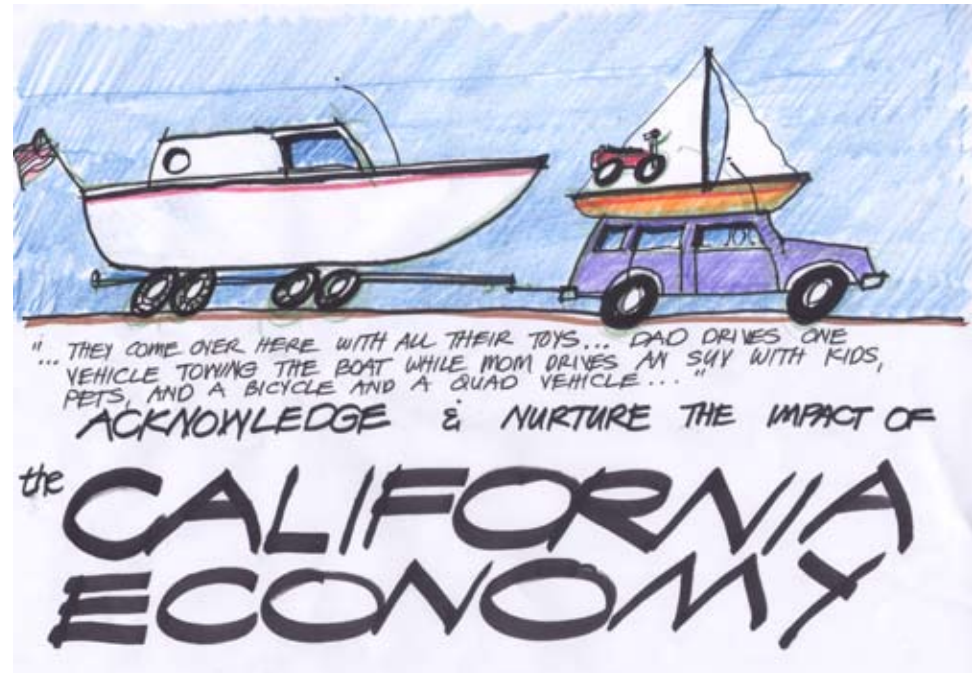
*"Definitely need performing Arts."*

*-Ashley Huff  
Lake Havasu City  
Citizen*





Uptown walkable zone



## Create a Local Serving Uptown

Uptown Lake Havasu is at a cusp—it can re-emerge as the community gathering point, or it can slide into obscurity. The era when downtowns have guaranteed business is long gone. Shopping malls, lifestyle centers, and strip commercial areas now command the majority of the retail dollar. Today, downtowns only survive when they show a special worthiness to their customers.

# Development

*"A couple of years ago I purchased a professional building on upper McCulloch... Now I'm trying to figure out if I made a mistake."*

*- Downtown building owner at the RJUDAT public forum*

## There are different types of successful downtowns:

1. The veneer success: Office-based economies that thrive from 9 to 5, Monday through Friday. These downtowns do not generally serve the greater community, except in providing jobs and limited cultural activities. This kind of shallow success is not an option for Lake Havasu given the paucity of non-medical offices.

2. The tourist community: Tourist-serving economies can create strong and vibrant downtowns. The Bridgewater Channel in Lake Havasu has the backbone of such a community. With some investment and regulatory changes, this area can become a world class center and gathering place. With the high rents, congestion, and frenetic activity inherent in such centers, however, this can not provide a best downtown to serve local needs.

3. Vibrant downtown centers: For most downtowns, the single most critical item for success is a strong resident population. Although this is clearly not sufficient for a successful downtown, it is always a critical ingredient. Other critical ingredients include a unique sense of identity and opportunities for the community to become engaged in the downtown. These downtowns find a niche that sets them apart from other shopping and hospitality opportunities.

## What is Uptown—A declining Main Street.

Uptown is most active 9-5, but even then it is not vibrant, it does not create a sense of place, and it does not engender love. Uptown has already lost the retail it is likely to lose as a result of competition from lower cost strip commercial sites, but it has not yet found a market niche to replace that loss.



## What does the existing market look like?

In conversations with stakeholders, it appears that the primary market for housing in Lake Havasu City is couples and families. New housing prices have soared over the last three years, doubling from an average of around \$150,000 to an average of \$300,000, and are expected to increase. Re-sales are somewhat flat, with an average of 162 days on the market for all closed listings, an unexpectedly long period for a housing market that many say is "hot". Listing prices average \$321,200 according to a market activity report provided by Heirloom Realty, dated Jan. 11, 2007



In addition, we have been told that anything under \$200,000 is considered “affordable” and that very little exists in that price range. A quick search of several web sites revealed the following condominiums that are currently for sale.

Existing commercial first floor space on main street is plentiful, but unattractive and in poor condition. Numerous retail stores look uninviting on the exterior, hiding goods inside that could be attractive to shoppers if they were more attractively displayed. Current rents are lower than in other commercial districts in Lake Havasu, ranging from as little as \$0.80 per s.f. to \$1.10 per s.f. Comparable spaces in strip centers rent for as much as \$1.50 per s.f.

Many stakeholders have complained about parking problems. The city implemented angle parking on the south side of McCulloch Boulevard in order to increase the supply of on-street parking. Traffic moves quickly along

Purchase price	s.f.	Price per s.f.	Bedrooms & baths	Notes
99,900	442	\$226	0.0/1.0	Rio Vista Condo Unit #11
111,900	679	\$165	1.0/1.0	Key Condo With Garage
114,500	777	\$148	1.0/1.5	Unit #119
155,000	810	\$191	1.0/1.0	The Preserve Condo Unit #102
162,900	801	\$203	1.0/1.0	The Preserve Condo Unit #227
164,900	936	\$176	2.0/2.1	Casa De Aqua condo- Bldg D Unit 30
183,000	1122	\$163	2.0/2.0	Condo Unit #101 With 2 car garage
194,000	1009	\$192	2.0/2.0	With 2 car garage

*“I don’t know where the downtown really is.”  
--Longtime resident at the R/UDAT public forum*

the Boulevard making reversing out of these spaces difficult and dangerous. Both sides have some parallel parking. There is ample parking, although very disorganized behind most of the buildings, off the alleys. Some blocks have pedestrian connectors to this parking from the main street and some do not.

Sale prices for one story commercial structures in poor condition are high. One recent sale of a “tear-down” 11,000 s.f. building was \$456,000, or \$41.45 per s.f.

The zoning code currently requires 4 parking spaces per thousand square feet for all commercial space, which is somewhat onerous.

## **What Uptown can be:**

A vibrant center for people to live, work and play. Uptown can be a place with a strong identity, a unique market niche, and many residents. Residents provide a guaranteed level of businesses for local merchants, provide eyes on the street to improve safety and reduce crime, and provide a vibrancy that builds a sense of place.

In how they spend their time and in surveys, Lake Havasu residents have indicated a desire for family-focused entertainment, special events, and retail uses to serve their needs. Many of those needs are not going to be met at the Bridge Channel site, but they can be uptown.

If Uptown serves local resident’s needs, it will also draw tourists in to supplement the economy. If it is primarily designed to serve local tourists, it may not also serve local residents. A local resident serving economy is more stable, less prone to seasonal variations, more likely to hire local

employees for year round jobs, even while still benefiting greatly from visitors who can provide the marginal income that can make the difference between success and failure.

## **Provide Enough Uptown Housing to Support Uptown**

Increasing the number of residents in and abutting uptown is the single most important action Lake Havasu can take to make uptown successful. In the commercial district itself, mixed commercial/residential (mixed-use) development, with housing allowed above the first floor, should be allowed and encouraged. Communities all over the country are finding that this type of mixed-use improves downtown vitality and safety.

In a strong and vibrant Uptown, it is likely that the majority of trips within a ten minute walk (½ mile) will be on foot, dropping off very quickly with distance from downtown (“Walkable Zone,” see Walkable Zone map).

If the Walkable Zone is built-out, with mixed use in the commercial district and residential in the rest of the zone, enough housing can be created to provide the population necessary for a strong Uptown. Densities in the neighborhood of 30 to 35 dwelling units per acre, with attractive designs, could make the area vibrant and be more attractive than much of the multifamily housing around downtown. Development in existing single family neighborhoods would, presumably, be lower or focused on very narrow lot single family homes instead of multifamily homes.

## In the Walkable Zone (all figures are estimates)

- Total land area: 825 acres
- Vacant land: 91 acres
- Persons per household citywide: 2.32
- Persons per household walkable zone: 2.0
- Potential new dwelling units within five years: 1,270
- Potential additional units within 20 years: 2,100
- **Recommended minimum dwelling units: 5,000**
- **Recommended minimum population: 10,000**

Downtowns with overwhelming natural features and anchors can thrive with smaller populations within walking distance, but 10,000 people is a good general average for what a city like Lake Havasu needs.

Housing within this area should be diverse to support different needs, desires, and income levels. The kind of



35 dwelling units per acre (with mixed commercial)



20 dwelling units per acre



22 dwelling units per acre

# Development

housing necessary to serve a family living a ten minute walk from Uptown is very different than a post-child couple living in a condominium above downtown.

## Provide Housing Uptown to Address Limited Housing Options Elsewhere

In addition to creating uptown vibrancy, Uptown housing provides other benefits collectively referred to as “Smart Growth.” When compared to developing on land which the state might sell to the north and east of town, Uptown housing provides:

- Greatly reduced development and environmental footprint, reducing impacts on natural habitat and ecosystems and water quality.
- Greatly reduced vehicle miles traveled, reducing energy use, road congestion, parking demand, and air pollution.
- Reduced demand for new infrastructure construction and maintenance.
- Increased supply of available housing sites, decreasing land costs.

*“Upstairs {in the uptown} for lofts and living areas will bring back life.”*  
--Resident, R/UDAT Public Forum

## How are we going to change the district and the market to become a vibrant center?

### Build 5,000 units in the next 10 years

As previously discussed, in order to create a vibrant district, which can support and elevate the main street, 5,000

housing units need to be created or exist within a ½ mile radius of the main street. This requires density, and the goal is to start with as much density as possible on main street.

Main street should become a vibrant district, primarily for the residents of Lake Havasu City, with a focus on the arts, meeting places, and supporting business. First floor commercial should be a mix of uses that are open, friendly and welcoming. Uses that are not open to the public (such as insurance offices) are not encouraged on the first floor. Upper floors should be residential units wherever possible, and buildings should be 4 stories tall and maximize available density while still providing adequate parking.



Smart Growth

## First steps

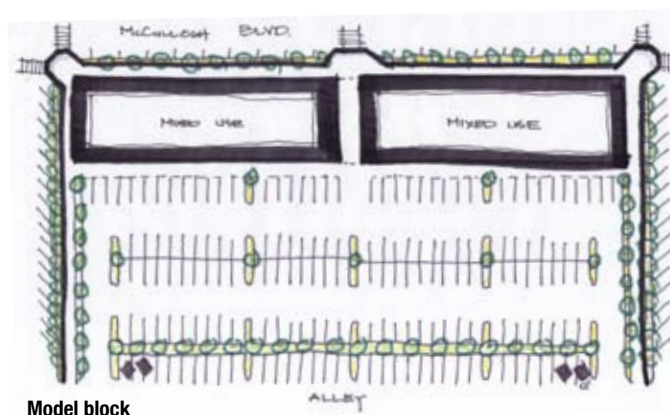
In conversation with various stakeholders, a number of parcels on main street, and directly behind it, were identified as ready to develop, either because the owners are ready and willing to make improvements and are interested in multi-use high density development, or because properties are for sale or owned by the city. We have categorized those properties into two groups, “ready now” and “ready soon” in the table below

## How will development be financed and achievable?

Using a model block 400 ft x 200 ft as an example of a housing project on main street, the team looked at a number of housing unit types to evaluate what would be most easily financed and built in this location. A number of factors were taken into consideration in suggesting the following solution. These factors may change with market conditions, so it is important that projects and programs are thoroughly and frequently evaluated.

The key issues that were considered in making the recommendations that follow include, but are not limited to:-

- There are numerous (if older) condominiums for sale in Lake Havasu City for less than \$200,000
- These units will not all have water views, and therefore are expected to be less desirable than on or close to the lake



*“Main Street needs a director to coordinate activities in the channel.”*

*-Lake Havasu City Citizen*

Type	Land	Approximate unit yield (1000 s.f.)	Approximate improved retail yield
Ready now on Main	459,823 s.f.	415 units	135,000 s.f.
Ready now off Main	349,273 s.f.	420 units	0 s.f.
Ready soon on Main	132,518 s.f.	120 units	40,000 s.f.
Ready soon off Main	262,513 s.f.	315 units	0 s.f.
Total	1,204,127 s.f.	1,270 units	175,000 s.f.

# Development

- There does not seem to be a high end rental market in Lake Havasu City. Units are available in the \$300 - \$600 per month range.
- Land costs are very high – too high for most projects to bear.
- Construction costs are currently around \$100 per s.f. or this type of construction

## Incentives must be created

Neither condominium nor rental residential projects pencil out, even if zoning restrictions on height and lot coverage are changed to create a dense, multi-use market. Incentives must be created for developers to build new housing in the Uptown District.

Rental projects are even more difficult to build than condominiums because there is no established market for rents above \$1000 per month. Affordable rental housing projects should be pursued by a not for profit community development corporation (CDC), dedicated to adding housing density and good retail uses to the Uptown District, and providing truly affordable housing.

### The achievable condominium project

- Units ranging in size from 900 – 1200 s.f. (and averaging 1,050 s.f.)
- 2 bedroom and 1 & ½ or 2 bathroom units
- 1.5 parking surface spaces per unit, and retail parking on site which is shared with the housing, providing an even higher parking ratio for owners in the evenings

when stores are closed

- Unit costs averaging \$220 per s.f., a little higher than the current market, but not too much
- Per unit costs ranging from \$148,500 to \$264,000
- Monthly principal and interest payments of \$870 to \$1545

In order to achieve this formula, incentives will need to be provided to both the developer and the buyer.

### Developer incentives

- Land costs at \$10 per s.f., to be implemented by creating a city of district land bank that is state funded.
- Zoning changes including increased height, density and elimination of any open space requirement.
- Redemption of construction sales taxes.
- Waiver of permitting fees

### Buyer incentives

- No property taxes for 10 years
- 25% of sales price deferred 0% second mortgage for income qualified buyers
- 40 year mortgages
- No down payment for income qualified buyers

Captions

Some of these incentives will be easy to implement and some will require significant discussion and fund-raising including federal and state funding programs.

## Create Workforce Housing Uptown

Many residents who teach in Lake Havasu's schools, work in Lake Havasu's retail and service industries, and provide the labor that keeps the economy going can no longer afford to live in Lake Havasu. This problem is especially acute for younger residents, who often earn the lowest wages and did not buy into the community before housing prices escalated.

Housing the workforce locally is critical to Lake Havasu's tourist-based economy. Without housing, it will be harder for businesses to recruit workers, traffic congestion will grow as workers need to drive increasing distance to find affordable housing, and there will be upward pressure on salaries. Studies of major employers across the nation indicate that access to workforce housing is critical for economic development.

In addition, providing workforce housing can help the children of Lake Havasu residents forming new households stay in the community. Many communities undergoing rapid escalation in values have found that their children are forced to move away to higher paying communities or lower housing cost communities because of housing costs.

Some retail, service, and hospitality workers are already at risk of homelessness or are actually homeless. Lack of workforce housing will expand the class of working homeless residents and those living in substandard housing such as the Shakespeare Motel. Besides creating inhuman

conditions, this also creates huge social costs and increases crime rates.

As part of encouraging workforce housing, Lake Havasu should work to improve the quality of existing housing and decrease adverse neighborhood impacts for those at the greatest risk of homelessness. Both the Shakespeare Motel and the Motel 6 will eventually be torn down as Uptown gets redeveloped and property values rise. The units should not, however, be torn down until the same number of transitional housing designed to serve those at risk of homelessness is built in the Uptown area. The new housing should be designed both to better serve residents and the surrounding community.

City efforts have been focusing on workforce housing as part of new housing subdivisions. Encouraging scattered site housing at new projects provides a good integration of workforce housing in different places in the community. However, such a model provides no benefit for downtown and eats up valuable land in the outlying sections of the community. Workforce housing in the outlying sections of town also makes it more likely that workers will have to drive to work, causing congestion and using up parking spaces, instead of walking. Instead of requiring developers to provide workforce housing, the City could give them a choice of providing workforce housing on-site in their project or funding the cost of providing new workforce housing in the Uptown walkability zone.

*"Prices have risen so fast over such a short time, it's difficult for people to qualify {for a mortgage}"*

*--Kevin Myers, River Valley Mortgage, as quoted in 2/2/2007 News Herald*

## **Focus on Downtown Retail and Office Development**

A vibrant downtown needs active store fronts. Historically, downtowns served as retail and civic centers, with government buildings, houses of worship, and hospitality businesses scattered among the retail anchors. As retail left downtowns, successful downtowns increasingly emphasized civic (public and private) activities and hospitality and entertainment.

It is critical to have attractive alive storefronts, with good design and without dead zones. In malls and downtowns, pedestrian traffic drops dramatically with vacant stores, parking lots, unattractive store fronts, and commercial buildings without interactive windows. Surveys of walkers consistently find that walking by active interactive storefronts always seems shorter, and more desirable, than walking by “dead” zones.

This is true in any community, but given the long linear nature of uptown Lake Havasu, it is especially important to focus on the quality and interactive nature of building and window design. The first floor façade of all new buildings facing the Main Street section of Uptown should be limited to retail, hospitality, entertainment, banks, and civic and cultural buildings.

Almost any storefront and any occupied building, however, is more interesting than empty lots and buildings. Uptown covers a large area for a community its size, given the other retail and entertainment opportunities in the city. As a result, Uptown can and should include all retail, banking, and service needs, from restaurants to retail to service. Even tattoo parlors and the like have a place. The pie

is big enough that almost all commercial uses meeting community design standards can be accommodated in Uptown.

Business and back office development in Lake Havasu should be focused in Uptown, and possibly discouraged elsewhere. Uptown should become the center for office-based employment. It would be useful if, as leases expire, key symbolic offices, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Partnership for Economic Development, move to Uptown. It would also be desirable for office uses (except for banks and real estate offices, which generate higher foot traffic) to be located above the first floor on the Main Street section of Uptown as far east as Mulberry Avenue. East of Mulberry Avenue and west of Smoketree Avenue, office use on the first floor is perfectly appropriate.

## **Create Civic Anchors**

Unfortunately for Lake Havasu, many of traditional non-commercial civic anchors, city government, libraries, churches, and post offices have settled elsewhere. Retail and hospitality alone does not create as strong a sense of identity as retail and hospitality combined with civic anchors.

Uptown needs new anchors to serve the future. The arts can provide one of the most important opportunities, and one that is not likely to be replicated in the strip commercial centers. There has been discussion for an Allied Arts Council arts center and other unrelated arts venues. Uptown provides the best possible venue for such an arts focus and provides a superb synergy with the housing, retail, and hospitality sectors that are going to

expand in the future.

Education and medical uses (“Eds and Meds”) are two of the fastest growing economic sectors in the United States. They have many similarities in common in that both often thrive in an urban campus (and increasingly both create faux urban centers where no existing center exists). There is a potential for both sectors in uptown.

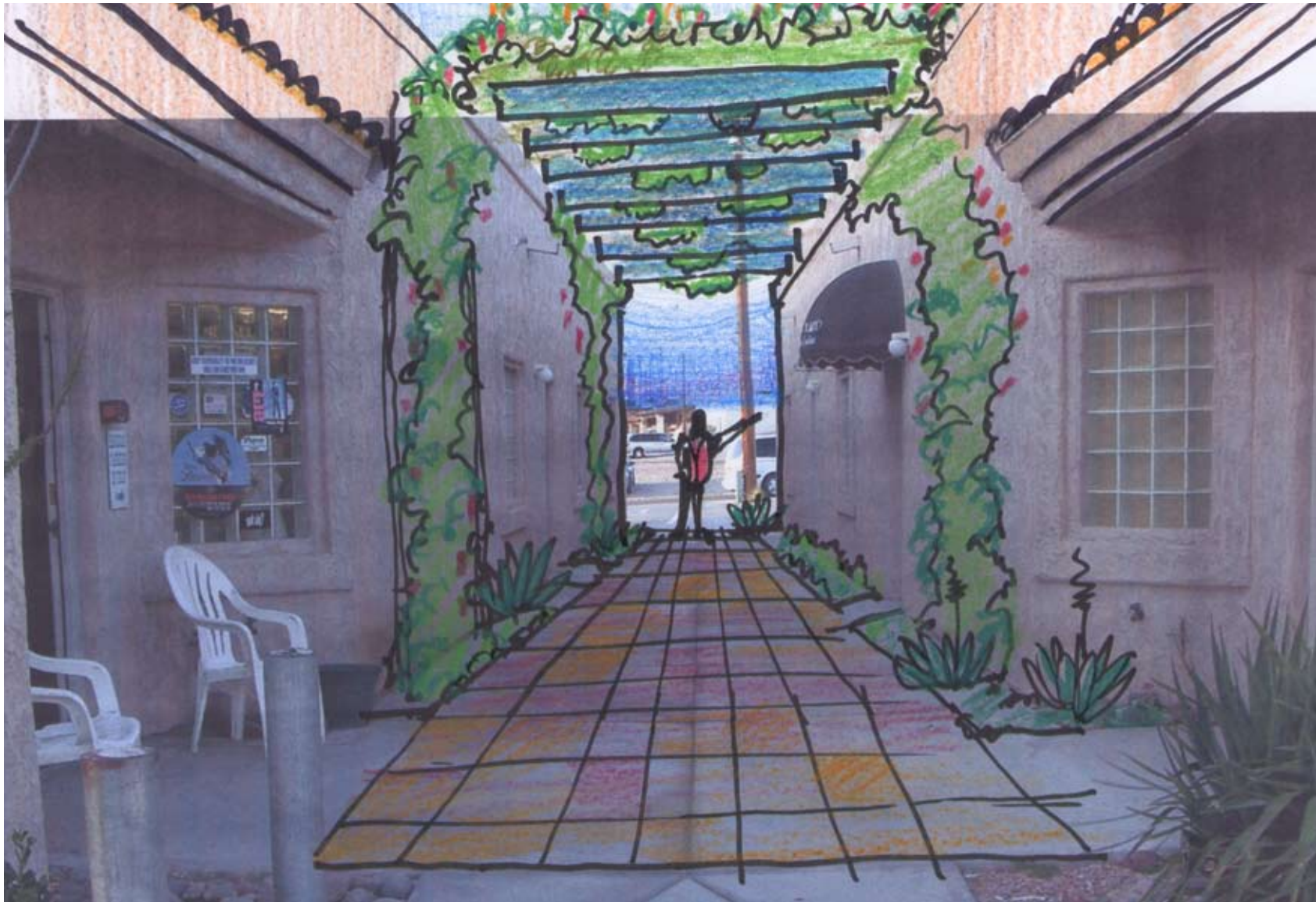
The education sector is a perfect match for Uptown. Uptown would be a perfect location for an outreach center and other facilities for both the new four-year university and for the Mahove Community College (possibly with the two sharing facilities).

The nearby Havasu Regional Medical Center makes Uptown a highly desirable location for professional offices and potentially for out-patient hospital facilities. As discussed above, these uses should be embraced above the first floor of the Main Street section of McCulloch Boulevard.



*“We need to try to address now what we want to be when we grow up.”*

*-Longtime resident at R/UDAT public forum.*



Existing narrow walkways under city ownership can be enhanced with shade trellis and vines and new textured paving.



## Zoning Policy

Downtown in Lake Havasu City is currently an eight to five commercial district. Few businesses are open after five and while parking quantity is perceived to be a problem, many parking lots remain only partially utilized during peak hours.

The current zoning does not allow residential in the downtown, but a 2004 amendment to the zoning ordinance established a special purpose district entitled the McCulloch Village District. In general, this district is a much better fit for the downtown in that residential

# Urban Form

uses are allowed on the upper floors and buildings can be built lot line to lot line. The building height restriction was increased to 30 feet, which essentially is a 2-story building. To create a more comfortable streetscape, while helping to meet the City's goals found in the General Plan of providing compact mixed use development, the R/UDAT team recommends amending the building height to 60-feet.

Drive-throughs should be accessed from the alley and should not be allowed to interrupt the ingress or egress on McCulloch Boulevard.

To create a lively shopping district, ground floors of buildings should be limited to retail, restaurants, coffee shops, banks, health fitness centers, art galleries, theatres, grocery stores, dry cleaners, hotels, banks and similar uses. Business offices should be located to upper floors.



## **The following zoning amendments are recommended:**

1. Expand the area where the McCulloch Village (MCV) District is intended to generally apply to include the properties with frontages along Mesquite and Swanson between Smoketree Avenue and Acoma Boulevard.
2. Amend the MCV District in the following ways:
  - Increase maximum building heights to 60 feet
  - Eliminate density requirements
  - Reduce parking requirements to 1 space per dwelling unit and 2 spaces per 1000 square feet for commercial uses, except for more intense uses such as restaurants and movie theatres.
  - Require parking to be placed to the rear of the building.
3. Allow additional uses.
  - Outdoor recreational facilities
  - Educational facilities.
  - Residential dwellings on all floors except for properties with frontages on McCulloch Boulevard.
4. Limit retail, restaurants, night clubs and similar uses to properties with frontages on McCulloch Boulevard.
5. Develop detailed architectural, landscape, and signage

guidelines throughout the district.

6. The City should initiate the public process to rezone the area described above to the classification MCV.

## Urban Design Guidelines

Highly desirable streets tend to be full of people. If you find a yourself walking down a street where there are others walking, sitting on benches, dining outside, playing and conversing, you are likely to be in the best part of town, where property values are the highest and vacancies are the lowest.

### What makes a desirable street?

A lot of different things, including the width of the street, the height of the buildings, the quality and materials that buildings are constructed of, the pavement, the landscaping, the signage and the retail uses just to name a few. When these elements are combined correctly the street will feel like a well designed space, an outside room, that people want to linger in.

### What standards should urban design guidelines include for McCulloch Boulevard in Uptown? At a minimum:

#### 2. Relationship of building to the street

The continued dominance of the automobile has impacted the architecture and layout of sites. Often buildings have been pushed far back from the street edge, windows have shrunk down in size while signage has grown to catch the eye of the speeding motorist. Large fields of asphalt fill



the foreground and have dulled the senses of pedestrians passing by. Here, the automobile rules and motorists are not happy if they are delayed in any way. The purpose of these streets has become to complete an errand, get to work and move on. Although benches are placed intermittently along the main street edge they are merely decorations to give the appearance that pedestrian needs are being addressed.

In order to build a truly walkable street, perhaps the most significant organizing element is the buildings themselves. They should be close to the street edge where storefront windows and entries can entertain and entice pedestrians to continue walking or venture into buildings. If buildings are set back too far they lose their tangible connection to the street. Buildings close to the edge and flanking both sides of a street will give a person the sense that they are in outdoor room which provides a sense of security.

If you are aiming for privacy, then a residential building should be set back at least five feet from the sidewalk. In the hot desert sun, buildings can also provide desirable shade.

### 3. Scale of buildings

The relationship of the street width to building height plays an important role in how the street will feel. If the buildings are too tall, the street will feel like a canyon. If they are too short, the street will feel wide and uncontained. The ideal ratio of height to width is somewhere between 1:1 and 1:2. McCulloch Boulevard should use a ratio of 1:1.5. The street is 90' wide from building façade to façade allowing a four story or 60' building height. The first story should have a taller floor to floor height to attract retail and restaurant uses.

### 4. Ground Floors

First floor heights should be more generous than upper floors, in the range of 12 – 14' tall, to attract retail and restaurant uses.

For retail stores to be successful and to create activated sidewalks, the majority of the floor façade should be glazed with storefronts.

### Architectural Standards

For streets to have that special appeal, buildings need to be interesting. A blank wall is boring and in order to ensure a lively main street, pedestrians need to be entertained at every step. Motorists, too, yearn for more interesting

building facades. Studies have shown that motorists will slow down without any other urging, if they are traveling along an interesting street full of people.

Many residents expressed concern that downtown looks worn out with bland stucco and faded paint. The R/UDAT team recommends that tailored architectural guidelines be developed for the Uptown District. Such guidelines should, at a minimum, address the percentage of glass storefront on a facade, entry conditions, rooftop screening and may also address appropriate colors for the district. Some districts or larger buildings may have additional standards to ensure that the building is a contextual scale with neighboring smaller buildings. Exterior building materials should reflect and complement the traditional materials and techniques of the desert. They should express the nature of construction techniques and the structural constraints of traditional, long-lasting building materials that will age gracefully in the intensive desert sun.

These new guidelines will be mandating the use as a bare minimum. Colored concrete, masonry, clay brick, and various sheet metal claddings give longer life of service, age with elegance, and have physical and visual integrity. We encourage balconies for all second floors on main street to provide outdoor living, capture views, and most importantly, to give shade to pedestrians walking on the ground floor. To enhance street life in summer months, south facing buildings on Main Street could place columns on sidewalk right-of-way to create porticos and shaded colonnades. Incentives could be offered to encourage 2nd floor terrace gardens to add green to the "Face of Main Street."

## 5. Signage shall be of high quality design, materials and craftsmanship.

### Signs

Signs should be clear, informative to the public and weather well. Sign regulations can prohibit signs that are glaring, large or create a distraction by covering architectural elements of the building. With buildings close to street, free standing signs should not be allowed. Signs of exceptional quality (pieces of art) may be given additional latitude in terms of size and height. Existing signs that don't meet the sign ordinance or are not maintained can be required to be removed when buildings are changed or a new sign is erected. More aggressive enforcement of the existing sign ordinance is recommended. Revisions to the existing sign ordinance to allow signs that are of "art quality" would provide income for local artists while making the downtown district unique. Blade signs should be encouraged.

### 6. Lighting

The quality of lighting can make the Uptown District an exciting place to visit. The existing lanterns are attractive but accent lighting on the buildings and in the pedestrian connections can serve dual benefit of providing lighting for pedestrians while providing reminders to motorists of the parking areas in common that are to the rear of the buildings. The lighting ordinance has provisions to protect the desert's dark night sky and any accent lighting needs to be designed to be in compliance.



## Parking

### On-Street Parking

On-street parking provides a physical barrier for pedestrians on walks and helps to moderate vehicular speeds. Parking space requirements can be reduced when on-street parking is allowed adjacent to properties.

### Off-street Parking

Uptown has many empty parking spaces in parking lots even when the businesses are open. The parking lots sit nearly empty after 5 pm and are woefully underutilized on weekends, especially on Sundays when most shops and offices are closed. Part of reason these lots sit partly empty is that they are not obvious to a visitor unfamiliar with the town's layout. Underutilized parking areas give the impression of a weak business district, that the golden days of downtown have past. The large expanses of unadorned parking areas make downtown less appealing.

The empty parking lot syndrome gives the downtown a negative appearance. Incentives for infill development, upper story residential dwellings and businesses that are active in the evening are recommended. Several private parking lots require backing over the public walk creating potential hazards for pedestrians.

### The following parking changes are recommended for on-street parking:

1. In the interim, change angle parking on McCulloch Boulevard to reverse angle parking (back-in).



2. Long term, reestablish parallel parking on both sides of McCulloch and add a landscaped median.
3. Park on-street throughout the district.
4. Replace lost private spaces with reverse angle parking (back in) public right-of-way.

**The following parking changes are recommended for the parking lots:**

1. Reduce or eliminate off-street parking requirements.
2. Reduce oversized parking maneuvering lanes and parking stall widths.
3. Reorganize and landscape parking lots.
4. Eliminate parking lots or redesign lot so backing over sidewalk is eliminated.

## Streetscapes

Swanson and Mesquite Avenues provide a great opportunity for a transition area from the commercial core to the single-family neighborhoods to the north and south. To make these streets more desirable as high density residential neighborhood, efforts should be made to reduce the vehicular traffic speed to 25 mph by introducing traffic calming measures. These streets currently are at about half the capacity of a three lane street (two lanes plus a center turn lane) and are 42 or more feet wide (face of curb to face of curb). By eliminating the center turn lane except

near key intersections, bike lanes can be added and on-street parking can be preserved. Maintaining on street parking and a reducing the lane widths will encourage motorists to drive slower.

**Driveways interrupt the sidewalks and create potential conflict points for pedestrians and motorists.**

*Recommendations.*

1. Eliminate redundant driveways.
2. Narrow overly wide driveways.
3. Require all new or renovated parking lots with access to an alley to connect to the alley only.
4. Permit a limited number of driveways that can also enhance safe pedestrian travel.

**Pedestrians cross at mid-block locations.**

*Recommendations.*

Break up long city blocks with mid-block crosswalks. To encourage pedestrians to use crosswalks, elevated crosswalks (speed tables) and/or narrow the street to reduce crossing distances.

**The following street conditions are recommended:**

1. Keep Swanson and Mesquite Avenues as two-way streets.
2. Keep main street open for vehicular traffic.
3. Drive-throughs should be accessed from the alley and

# Urban Form

should not be allowed to interrupt the ingress or egress on McCulloch Boulevard.

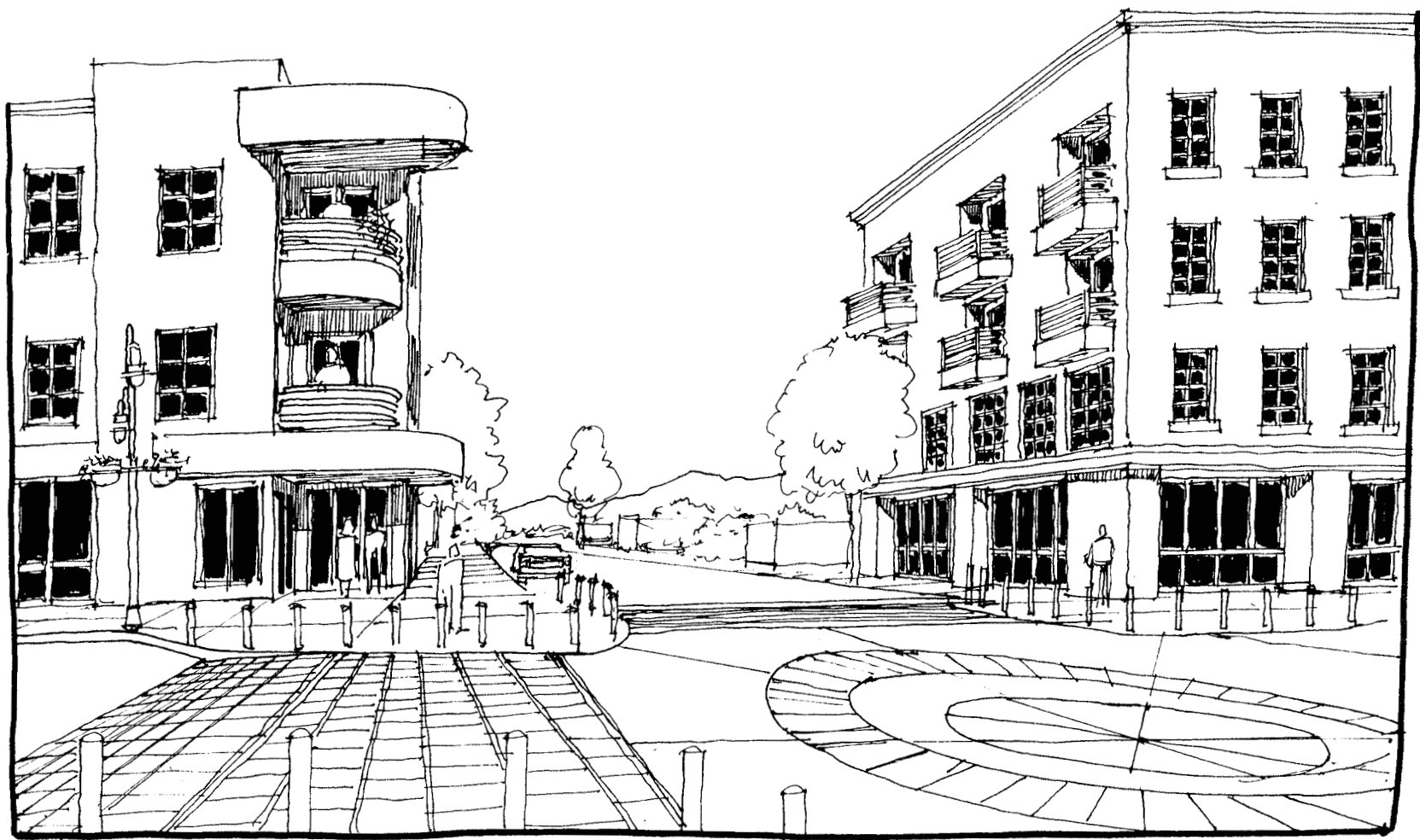
Creating a great street can be easily achieved if certain organizing elements are adhered to. More important than constructing an expensive building is how that building relates to the street. More important than the appearance of a parking lot is how that parking lot relates to the building. More important than the material of the sidewalk pavement is how that sidewalk connects you to other parts of the community.

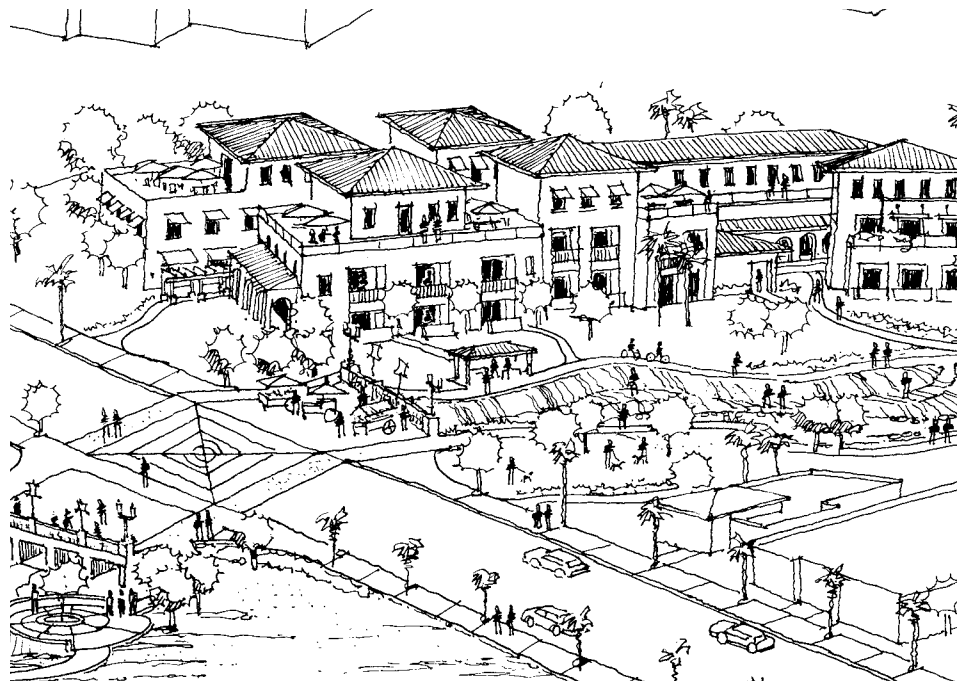
Naturally, some streets will evolve into the most desirable, highly trafficked streets, while others will play a more supportive and utilitarian role. Both are important and are interdependent of each other. What you do on one street will have an impact on another street so it is critical that the network of streets are studied together.



# Urban Form







## Implementation

There are numerous tasks that need to be accomplished in the coming months, and a strategy should be put in place to ensure they are completed. The primary overseers of the process are the:

- The community
- Implementation Committee
- The Uptown District CDC
- The Uptown District Main Street Program
- The Highway 95 Advisory Committee
- The Pima Wash Committee

# Implementation

## Key Tasks

1. The community participates in meetings and events to review and discuss the R/UDAT report.
2. The Implementation Committee reviews and evaluates the R/UDAT report recommendations, develops short and long-range objectives and priorities, produces an action plan and implementation time-table and communicates with the community:
  - Produces notice of all upcoming community forums to solicit reactions to the R/UDAT report.
  - Publishes a newsletter or e-newsletter and works closely with the local news agencies.
  - Establishes a distribution strategy for the action plan.
  - Arranges for a follow-up visit by R/UDAT team members.
3. The Implementation Committee communicates with AIA staff about R/UDAT activities regarding the successes and disappointments of the process.
4. The R/UDAT Team returns to the community within a year to evaluate progress and make recommendations for further action.

## Role of the Implementation Committee

The American Institute of Architects recommends that the Implementation Committee be constituted to include

the community members and groups that will be affected by the potential changes. Certainly the Implementation committee members are valuable for continuity, but new members will provide important contributions. The members shall be committed to the success of the effort and have skills required to move forward during this stage. As recommended for the earlier phases of the R/UDAT process, the members should remain non-political and be broadly representative of the community.

## The Implementation Committee has several important roles:

### 1. Review the team's report (months 1 -3)

It is important to quickly obtain endorsements and commitments for actions recommended in the report which have community support. The Implementation Committee will need to schedule community meetings to discuss the report, identify priorities, assign responsibilities and identify areas where additional information or direction is needed. The committee will prepare goals and objectives for near and long-term activities.

### 2. Create structure for future activities and implementation

There are three major implementation activities that need to be pursued and all three require different approaches. The Implementation Committee will:

- create the Uptown CDC
- create an advisory committee to the Mayor on Highway 95 improvements

- create an advisory committee to the director of Parks and Recreation on Pima Wash improvements.

All 3 organizations /task forces will report back to the Implementation Committee who will be charged with ownership of the R/UDAT plan and its implementation

## **Uptown District**

Activities in the Uptown District will be greatly increased. Main Street activities should continue, under the auspices of a Main Street organization and should encompass business assistance, events, safety and cleanliness and other activities typical of Main Street organizations. In addition the Main Street program should develop a comprehensive calendar of public events to enhance Main Street.

A second organization should be created, a Community Development Corporation (CDC), to tackle the bricks and mortar projects that the R/UDAT plan recommends in the Uptown District. This CDC needs to be skilled, powerful and absolutely focused on all aspects of the district's redevelopment. It must have the ability to at a minimum:

- strategically pursue the larger vision of the plan
- ensure that the R/UDAT's physical recommendations such as zoning, design guidelines, parking changes are implemented, expanded on and adapted appropriately
- develop a strategic housing plan to ensure affordable and diverse housing types

- be a developer in order to create low income housing
- be the developer of last resort for important cultural and other projects
- provide technical assistance to private interests wishing to invest in the CDC's mission area and any other such activities that will ultimately implement the R/UDAT's and community's vision.

The CDC must have a board, with diverse representation from uptown and the city at large. The board should include local stakeholders, developers, bankers, city officials and be positioned as an educated, skilled and powerful entity in order to accomplish the tasks set out by the team.

Once the CDC has formed, it shall raise money in order to hire an Executive Director. A regional or national search should be conducted. The Executive Director should have the skills to swiftly and forcefully manage the work outlined in this document and by the Implementation Committee. At a minimum the Executive Director must have leadership skills, be able to communicate the vision to the community and potential partners, be politically astute, have economic development or real estate development experience, and be extremely focused. This should be treated as a very important, high level position by the community.

## **Highway 95 Corridor Improvements**

An advisory committee will be formed, directly responsible

# Implementation

to the Mayor, to drive forward the suggested improvements to the Highway 95 corridor

## **Pima Wash Improvements**

An advisory committee will be formed, directly responsible to the Director of Parks and Recreation to drive forward improvements to the Pima Wash, in addition to the water's edge improvements on the channel and the island.

### **3) Produce an Action Plan (months 4 – 6)**

The Implementation Committee will produce an action plan in conjunction with the newly formed CDC and will begin this portion of the process by using the goals and objectives prepared during the review of the report. The action plan should start with a statement of the community's vision for the future, include a statement of the long-range goals, identify the objectives that the community intends to accomplish in the next three years, and enumerate the projects that will be initiated in the next 12 months. The physical projects should be illustrated on a map of the community and the action plan should include estimates of costs and funding strategies for the projects identified.

As with any important public activity, early results help build momentum for subsequent steps. The committee should identify strategic and measurable goals and objectives that are achievable and ensure that the resources are committed for success. The committee will want to solicit the endorsement and involvement of political leaders and future political candidates to ensure that the plan and the process of developing it is understood.

### **4) Maintain broad community involvement & interest (ongoing)**

Successful implementation of the report's recommendations will require the ongoing support of the Lake Havasu City community. The Implementation Committee's role will be to solicit involvement through sharing information and keeping the R/UDAT process and report fresh in the community's focus.

The Implementation Committee is already setting the stage for this work with their planned Education Program. The Education Team has already planned the following activities and is encouraged to plan more:

- A community meeting to discuss the R/UDAT findings.
- A second meeting to finalize what needs to be accomplished and how the community education program can be improved.
- Active outreach to the local media, including letters to the editor, a radio show, a tv show, and other such activities.
- Promotional videos that tell the R/UDAT story; the process, the results and next steps.

### **5) Follow up visit (months 9 – 12)**

Some members of the R/UDAT team will return to Lake Havasu City after about a year. This visit will be to assist in implementing the action plan. The team members will meet with the implementation committee to learn about the community's response to the R/UDAT report,

review the action plan, comment on progress made to date, and offer additional insight to help focus and guide the implementation efforts. The follow-up visit is also to respond to the committee's questions. This visit will require efforts similar to those taken for the R/UDAT team's initial visit – appointments, agendas and venues will need to be scheduled and arranged.

## Tools for Implementation

### Government Must Assist Private Uptown Projects

Uptown has been in decline for a number of years because of changing market conditions, a lack of identity, out-of-date zoning, and the challenging economics of redevelopment. Some of the best projects, especially workforce housing, are only going to happen if city, state, and federal governments provide financial and other incentives.

### Workforce Housing Assistance

Several competitive state and federal funding sources can help make affordable and workforce housing projects available. Depending on the program, these funds are available for housing and housing projects where a certain percentage of the units are designed to serve households earning less (sometimes substantially less) than 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) who cannot afford to pay private sector fair-market rents.

Mohave County Area Median Income      \$42,800

Arizona Median Income      \$54,900

Mohave County Fair Market Rent (2 bdrm) \$      676

(Source: HUD 2006)

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) is the nation's largest affordable housing program. It provides tax credits, typically used through housing syndications, for rental housing. These programs can provide incentives for investors to build multifamily housing above commercial in the downtown and dense housing at the edge of downtown.

Properly placed, LIHTC projects can provide housing to Lake Havasu's workforce and help provide the critical mass to support downtown. Current there are three LIHTC projects that help house Lake Havasu City's workforce: Anacapa Apartments, Briarwood II Apartments, and Casa Del Lago, with a total of 156 affordable units. None of these projects contribute to Uptown.

The Arizona Housing Fund, using state and Federal HUD HOME funds, can help fund rental housing, including LIHTC, and homeownership, and rehabilitation of owner-occupied housing. The City of Lake Havasu is currently using \$496,000 of HOME funds to repair 46 homes. The City is also using Housing Trust Funds for emergency housing repairs. In future grant cycles, the City or non-profit partners could apply for HOME, Housing Trust Fund, and State Special Projects Funds, to repair and build Uptown affordable housing.

# Implementation

## **US HUD Community Development Block Grant**

Community Development Block Grant, federal funds distributed by the State of Arizona, can also be used to provide workforce housing (for households earning up to 80% of Area Median Income. It can also be used for a variety of other purposes that could benefit Uptown, including removal of slums and blight, and public facility and economic development improvements of benefit to low and moderate income peoples. Elderly are assumed to be low and moderate income for CDBG purposes.

Lake Havasu's last CDBG grant was \$628,225. The funds remaining are currently committed to pay for sewer capacity fees. Future grants could potentially used for slums and blight clearance or other eligible uptown improvements.

The Section 108 Loan Guarantee portion of the Federal CDBG program can be used to provide loan guarantees for private, or public, projects of benefit to low and moderate income persons. The land guarantee can help reduce interest rates on a project, but the interest rate reduction is not dramatic and the community must be willing to use future CDBG funds as collateral.

## **US HUD McKinney Supportive Housing Program**

Supportive Housing Program monies, distributed by competitive grant, can be used to provide housing for homeless persons. Mohave County Community and Economic Development currently receives grants for housing for homeless persons with mental illness. Lake Havasu's community development partners could apply for

these funds to build new transitional housing for homeless individuals. The City should insure new transitional housing is developed before removing any single-room hotels (e.g., the Shakespeare Hotel).

## **Sales Tax Rebates**

Rebating sales tax to property owners, in return for developing projects that will help revitalize uptown, is probably the single most effective local government financial incentive. These rebates are of sales tax that the City would not of collected if not for the development. As a result, the rebate does not cut into actual municipal receipts, but it can provide an incentive to the developer sufficient to allow some great, but financially marginal, projects to proceed.

## **Economic Development Assistance**

The state of Arizona has several programs to assist local businesses locate, train, and expand. Some of these programs would be of use to new business located in Uptown.

The Arizona Economic Strength Project funds road projects with direct benefit to the economy. It could potentially make some of the road improvements, such as a raised median, recommended for Uptown.

The Federal Enterprise Zone in Lake Havasu, which provides tax benefits for job generating activity, unfortunately, does not include Uptown and the Bridgewater Channel.

## Government Must Invest in the Uptown Public Realm

Uptown, as with healthy vibrant downtowns around the world, should be a cash cow that provides significant support to Lake Havasu's municipal budget and to area economy, as well as providing benefits to the City's natural and built environment. To achieve this, the community must first provide political, legal, and financial investments--investments that will provide a far greater return than most private or public investments.

Just as the benefits from a healthy Uptown serve the entire community, some of the costs must also be borne by the entire community. Every truly healthy city, in economic, social, and environmental terms, needs a healthy downtown.

## Zoning Incentives

The zoning should provide more incentives for development in Uptown and the immediately abutting residential neighborhood. Clearly allowing mixed use along the entire McCulloch/Main Street area of Uptown, greater height in Uptown and the abutting residential neighborhood, and decreased parking requirements together will all help leverage a healthy Uptown.

## Transient Lodging Tax

Lake Havasu charges a 3% transient lodging tax on hotel room and transient lodging charges, over and above local, county, and state sales tax. In Lake Havasu, these funds are dedicated to activities which make the community

more attractive to tourists and visitors (conventions and economic development). Including all transient and sales taxes, the total tax on transient lodging is less in Lake Havasu than in many tourist centers and most urban centers in Arizona. Many other areas of the country have substantially higher rates.

### *Total tax (transient and sales) on hotel bill*

<i>Lake Havasu</i>	<i>10.78%</i>
<i>Flagstaff</i>	<i>10.34%</i>
<i>Page</i>	<i>12.74%</i>
<i>Payson</i>	<i>11.72%</i>
<i>Phoenix</i>	<i>12.07%</i>
<i>Scottsdale</i>	<i>11.92%</i>
<i>Sedona</i>	<i>12.33%</i>
<i>Springerville</i>	<i>11.05%</i>
<i>Tempe</i>	<i>12.07%</i>

Increasing the Transient Tax by 1% of all hotel bills and dedicating the revenue to fund Uptown public sector improvements and an improved transit loop from Bridgewater Channel to Uptown would provide a steady source of revenue to make these improvements. This tax would leverage improvements and services that would eventually help increase the number of visitor days to Lake Havasu.

Such a permanent funding would generate approximately \$240,000 the first year. These funds would automatically

# Implementation

increase each year with increased hotel rates and as new hotel rooms come on-line.

## **Improvement Districts for Enhanced Municipal Services**

An improvement district (referred to as a business improvement district in most states) is an opportunity for local businesses to collectively purchase services. This is not a tax, but rather a group purchasing program for collective benefit. Services such as security, cleaning, promotion and other services, of direct benefit to property owners, can be expanded and paid for collectively by those who benefit.

## **Sales Tax Rebates**

Lake Havasu's portion of the sales tax is 2% of total purchases. The City has the right to enter into a development agreement with a developer and rebate all or a portion of this tax when such rebate will leverage new development. This rebate could be used to encourage new economic development in Uptown. The City has experience with this tool.

## **Special Assessments**

Uptown businesses are still paying off the special assessment that funded sidewalk and streetscape improvements, even though simple streetscape improvements are not enough to make uptown healthy. No new special assessments should be imposed until these bonds are paid off, and only then for improvements with a clear financial benefit to abutting property owners.

## **State Government Assistance**

Lake Havasu uses the various state government assistance programs to varying degrees and clearly has the expertise to tap into these resources. Many of these tools are appropriate to help implement some of the recommendations in this report. These include:

- *Greater Arizona Development Authority below market infrastructure financing*
- *Main Street program technical assistance (Lake Havasu's is part of this program)*
- *Workforce training program*

## **Safe Accountable, Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act**

Federal transportation funds for functionally classified arterials, matched by state funds, are used for transportation improvements identified in the Regional Transportation Plan and the annual Transportation Improvement Program. Funding is constrained and projects are ranked based on regional and statewide goals.

In addition, to the Federal Surface Transportation Program, which funds most major surface road projects, there are three other major programmatic categories of note. Funding for all SAFETEA programs are constrained.

First, the Enhancement Program funds non-traditional transportation programs that enhance transportation systems. Everything from bicycle and multiuse trails to sound barriers are eligible.

Second, Congestion Management Air Quality funds can be spent on measures which reduce emissions, from bicycle paths to park-and-ride lots to intersection improvements which reduce queuing and the resulting emissions.

Finally, several related programs of the Federal Transit Administration fund transit, primarily capital facilities.

## **CDBG and Section 108 Loan Guarantees**

These programs, described in the last section, can be used for public as well as private projects.



Standing Left to right: David Downey, Gary Padgett, Wayne Feident, Hunter Gee, Russell Soyring, Christian Butler, Eve Picker, Miahael Desbares, Kyle Daevel, Chris Ackerman.

Kneeling left to right: Ebbi Azimi, James Abell

# R/UDAT Team

Hunter Gee, AIA is the Director of Community Planning for Looney Ricks Kiss Architects in Nashville, Tennessee. He has years of experience in a wide variety of planning and urban design projects including numerous community-oriented projects around the country. Hunter participates in many R/UDATs including Springfield, OH and Pleasant Grove, UT. In 1999, Hunter chaired the host committee for the East Nashville R/UDAT, that developed a master plan for neighborhoods devastated by two tornadoes. In 2002-03, he was president of the board of Rediscover East!, the not-for-profit charged with implementing R/UDAT plan. Hunter speaks national on smart growth, designing with density, and building vibrant communities



James Logan Abell, FAIA, LA, has served on AIA Urban Design Assistance Teams in Ohio, Utah, California, Texas and numerous local design assistance teams in Arizona. He has been a featured speaker at AIA symposia on urban design in St. Louis, Washington D.C., Lexington, KY, Charlotte, NC, and Huntington Beach, CA. He has been a visiting Professor of Architecture at ASU intermittently since 1984 and is currently teaching at the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture. He is the 1989 recipient of the Arizona Architects medal and a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects. Since 1979, Abell & Associates Architects, Ltd. have focused on the integration of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Design.



Christopher Julian Ackerman, AIA is Principal of The Ackerman Group in Coronado, California. He has worked in many capacities to improve the urban fabric of Coronado for over 20 years and serves as 2nd Vice President of Coronado Mainstreet Ltd. Chris has provided land planning services for several U.S. Navy & Marine Corps bases and has designed resort hotels and governmental hotel type facilities. Specializing in historic preservation, renovation and modifications, he has completed work on many such projects including ones involving National Historic Landmarks. Chris holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Arizona State University.



# R/UDAT Team



David Downey, CAE, Assoc. AIA is the Managing Director at AIA Center for Communities by Design. Under his direction the Center develops resource tools and education programs, provides design assistance teams to local communities, and leads the AIA disaster response program nation wide. He also leads the AIA150 Blueprint for America, the flagship program of the AIA's 150th anniversary. David served as executive director of the Michigan Society of Planning for ten years and held urban design positions since 1989. David received his degree in Architecture and Design with a focus on Urban Design from Lawrence Technological University.



Wayne Feiden, AICP, is the planning director for the City of Northampton, Massachusetts and does some work as a planning consultant in private practice. Wayne Feiden has been a planner for twenty-five years, with extensive experience working to help revitalize downtowns and communities. His planning awards include smart growth awards, planning advocacy, and distinguished leadership. Wayne has an undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan in Natural Resources, a Masters in Regional Planning from the University of North Carolina, and has served as an Eisenhower Fellow to Hungary.



Eve Picker, president of no wall productions, has built an entrepreneurial real estate development business, which has rocked Pittsburgh. Trained first as an architect then Urban Design at Columbia University she has focused on downtown and urban neighborhoods that others have ignored, transforming vacant warehouses into highly desirable loft-style residences and offices. Her projects have set the stage for future residential development in downtown Pittsburgh, have forced new policy to be adopted and have created new marketplaces. They have also been recognized in numerous ways, as has she, including publication in Dwell Magazine, an AIA honor award and as one of PA's 50 Best Women in Business.

Russell Soyering, AICP serves as the Planning Director for the City of Traverse City for the last 21 years and served as the City Planner for the City of Monroe for 6 years. Russ served as President of the Michigan Association of Planning and is a member of the Congress for the New Urbanism. He holds a Bachelors degree in Resource Development at Michigan State University and a Masters degree in Regional Planning from the University of Michigan. Each day, Russ bicycles or walks to work and for most errands.



J. Kyle Daevel is a freelance designer offering services in environmental graphic design, graphic design, furniture and products. Formally a senior environmental graphic designer with Looney Ricks Kiss Architects, Inc. (LRK) in Memphis, Tennessee from 1998 through 2007. While with them, Kyle was instrumental in the design and management of LRK's EGD services for projects such as FedExForum, First Tennessee Bank, FedEx Institute of Technology, and STAX Music Academy and Museum of American Soul Music. Kyle has a BFA in Graphic Design and is currently at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills Michigan pursuing a MFA in 3D.



# R/UDAT Team



Taliesin students: Christian Butler, Michael Desbarres, and Ebbie Azimi

## Students

Students and faculty from Taliesin, the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture assisted the R/UDAT team with photographic documentation, digital rendering, research, and conceptual design. Their assistance was invaluable in meeting the goals of the R/UDAT process.

The AIA involves university students not only for their invaluable help but also to give them an opportunity to participate in a significant community planning effort. By working alongside the team members, they have an opportunity to engage with civic leaders, property owners, and citizens, and contribute to the vision that evolves into the final recommendations contained in this report.

The team extends its deep gratitude to Christian, Michael, and Ebbie for their tireless patience, positive attitude and their creative minds.

# Acknowledgements

## Steering Committee List

Jim Salscheider – *Executive Director of Main Street Association*

Gary Kellogg – President, CEO – *Partnership for Economic Development*

Martha Bennett – President, Havasu 100; *Chairman of Board – Partnership for Economic Development*

Jerry Clark – Board Member of Havasu 100, *Board Member Main Street Association*

John Parrott, Past Chairman of Board - *Convention Visitors Bureau; Board Member of Main Street Association*

Charles Cassens, *Communications Director, Lake Havasu City*

## Major Sponsors

Havasu 100

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Partnership for Economic Development

Colorado River Building Industry Association

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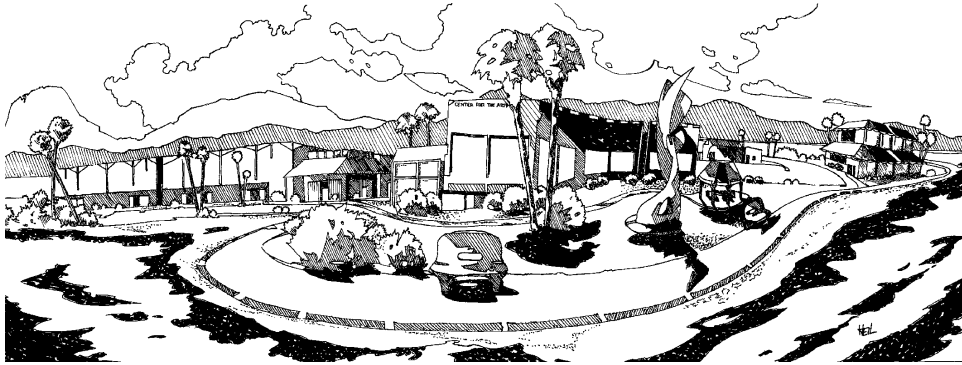
Signs by Team Oakley

Gary Padgett

Network Systems & Solutions

Lake Havasu Chamber of Commerce

# Acknowledgements



Artwork by Greg Heil



Artwork by Greg Heil

## Lake Havasu City Teachers

A special thank you to Gail Malay and the Lake Havasu City School district for their hard work and direction for the art students that participated in the R/UDAT vision process. We appreciated the many fine drawings that were created and viewed by the public. Directed by Jennifer Hilbert, the following teachers are commended for their contribution:

Thunderbolt: John Rodrigues

Jamaica: Kevin Bangsund

Smoketree: Dawn Edwards

Oro Grande: Ann Gauger

Starline: Cynthia Steele

Lake Havasu City High School: Jennifer Hilbert

*And special thank you to Nick Sanchez, Dean of Mohave Community College, and Dan Lara and Allan Hall for the contributions of their art students.*

## Focus Groups

### *1. Re-development Challenges for the future*

*Moderator:* Jim Salscheider  
*LHC Citizens:* Larry Prielipp, Jesse Johnson, Carl Flusche, Don Bergen, Bud Schultz, Bob Whelan, and Doug Hasslan

### *4. Re-Development Challenges for the Future*

*Moderator:* Gary Kellogg  
*LHC Citizens:* Don Clark, Ed Jacobs, Jim Santiago, Tom Askland, Marcia Kellison, Bob McClory, Allen Atwell, and Darren Craig, Mark Durham

### *7. Mixed Use/Density How do we do it?*

*Moderator:* Martha Bennett  
*LHC Citizens:* *Laura Smith, Larry Didion, Bill Miller, George Link, Steve Cleverly, John Parrott, Mike Bradley- Juicy's, Wes Brownfield*

### *2. Mixed Use / Density How do we do it?*

*Moderator:* Martha Bennett  
*LHC Citizens:* Harvey Jackson, Dallas Finch, Val Strylie, Stuart Schmelling, Tim Schugrue, Steve Greeley, Carolyn Bruce, and Cal Sheehy

### *5. Future of our City What does Health / Education look like in forty years?*

*Moderator:* Martha Bennett  
*LHC Citizens:* Kathy Cox, Ed Wignal, Dorothy Sawyer, Nick Sanchez, Chad Garrison, Becky Goldberg, and Shannon Williams

### *8. Public Infrastructure Traffic & Parking*

*Moderator:* Jim Salscheider  
*LHC Citizens:* Scott LeGrand, Mark Clark, Jerrod Lyman, Gene Tucker, Lisa Krueger, Sam Scarmardo, Bill DeJulio, Mike Schuler, Jim Liesen, and James Tammaro

### *3. Future of our City The 40 year vision*

*Moderator:* Gary Kellogg  
*LHC Citizens:* Mike Quinn, Gary Meyers, Wes Brownfield, Ralph Tapscott, Dennis Van, Linda Binder, Don Callahan, Dub Campbell, and Floyd Hamilton

### *6. Main Street: Where do we go?*

*Moderator:* Jim Salscheider  
*LHC Citizens:* Dean Agius, Paul Lehr, Kathy Hodel, Dave DePeal, Michelle Pounders, Marcia Tucker, Lynda French, and Nancy Campbell

### *LHC + MCC Students 40 Year Vision*

*Moderator:* Gary Kellogg  
*LHC Students:* Selected by Gail Malay, Reana Perkins ,Samantha Pakins, Madison Zasadil, Ashley Huff, Jose Arana, Bryce Wilde, Wendy Brightwell ,Mackenzie Roesti, and PJ Fondano

